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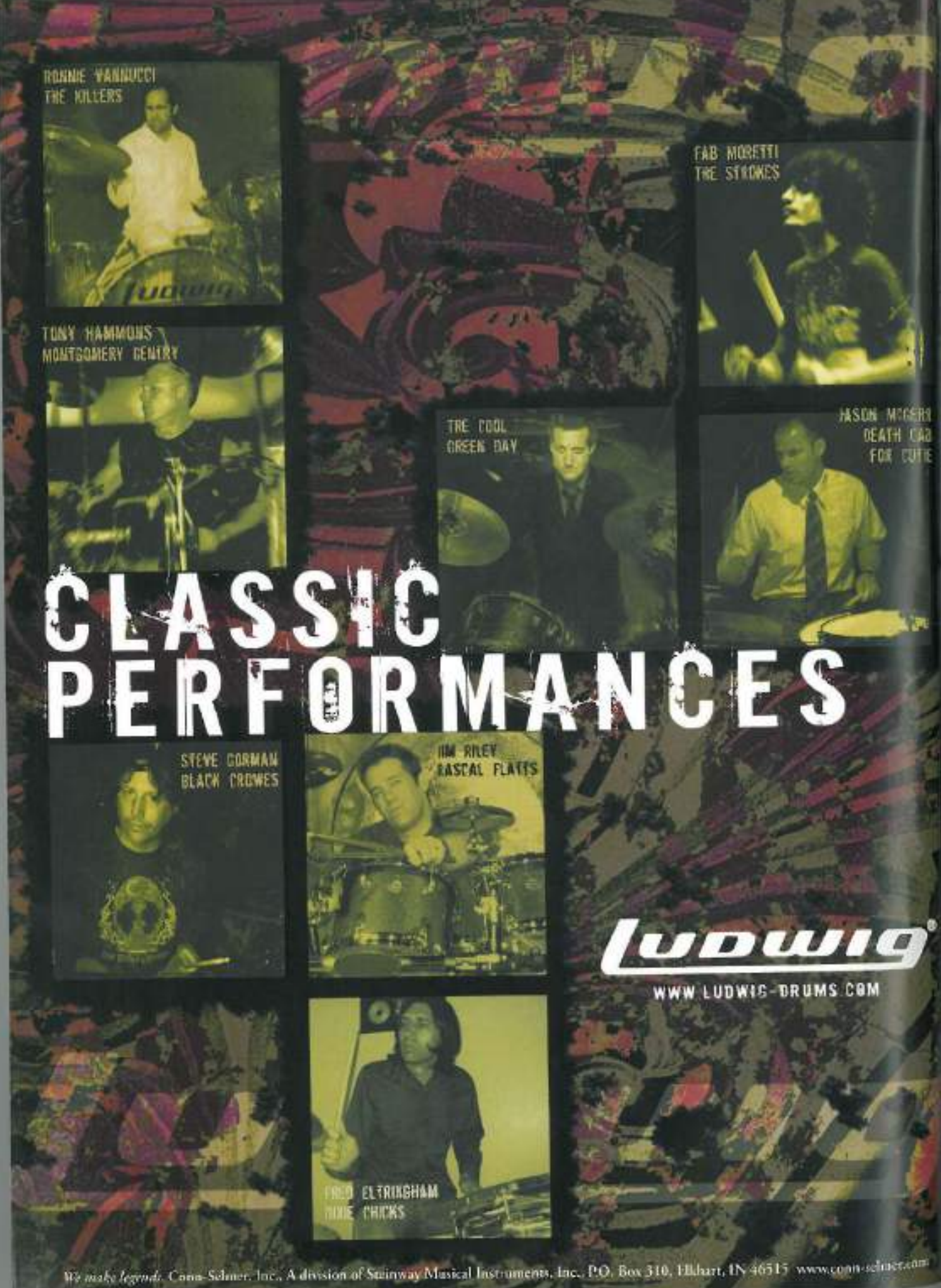

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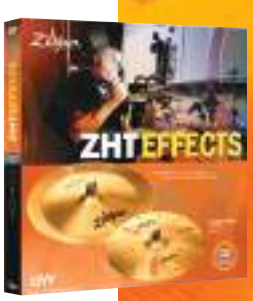

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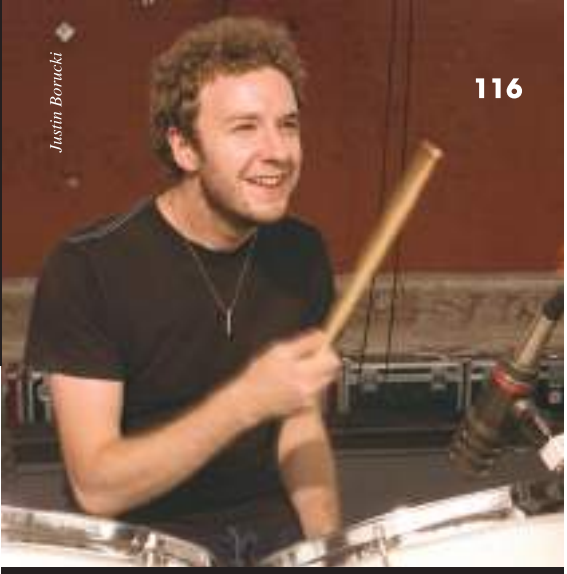
MODERN DRUMMER Celebrating 30 years



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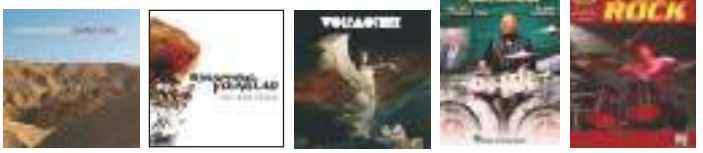

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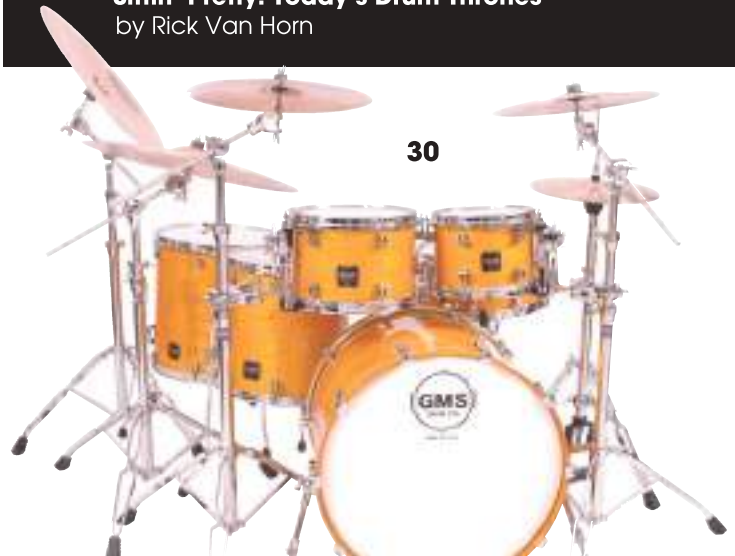

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Sharing The Wealth

I've been a drummer for quite a while, and I've managed to accumulate a lot of drum-related...well...*stuff*. Drums, cymbals, stands, pedals, heads, sticks, bass drum beaters, multi-clamps.... You name it, I've probably got it. For years, my wife joked that I had enough spare equipment to start up my own drumshop. After a while, though, she stopped joking and started asking seriously what I was doing with all that stuff.

Naturally, at first I told her that everything I had was essential gear, and that even if I didn't take it all out on every gig, I'd surely have a need for it at some point in the future. And, in fact, I have used some of my spare gear to good advantage on certain occasions. Still, there was no denying that much of the gear sitting on my storage shelves had been sitting there, untouched, for quite some time. I came to the conclusion that I really did have more gear than I could possibly use in one drumming career.

With that in mind, I started thinking how I might reduce my stuff quotient without feeling like I was trashing a treasure trove. It dawned on me that many school music programs—especially those in inner-city schools—are woefully underfunded, and thus can't afford to buy the very sort of gear that was sitting in my garage.

I made a few phone calls, talked to a few music teachers, and found homes for my extra gear among drummers who were extremely grateful to get it. It's a great feeling to know that such a relatively small gesture on my part might help a talented young drummer to realize his or her potential. (It's also good to be able to see the floor of my garage.)

If you're the pack-rat type, like me, I suggest that you take a hard look at all of your accumulated drum stuff. Think about items that might have more real value *out* of your collection than in it. Let me tell you, there's no putting a price on a young drummer's smile.

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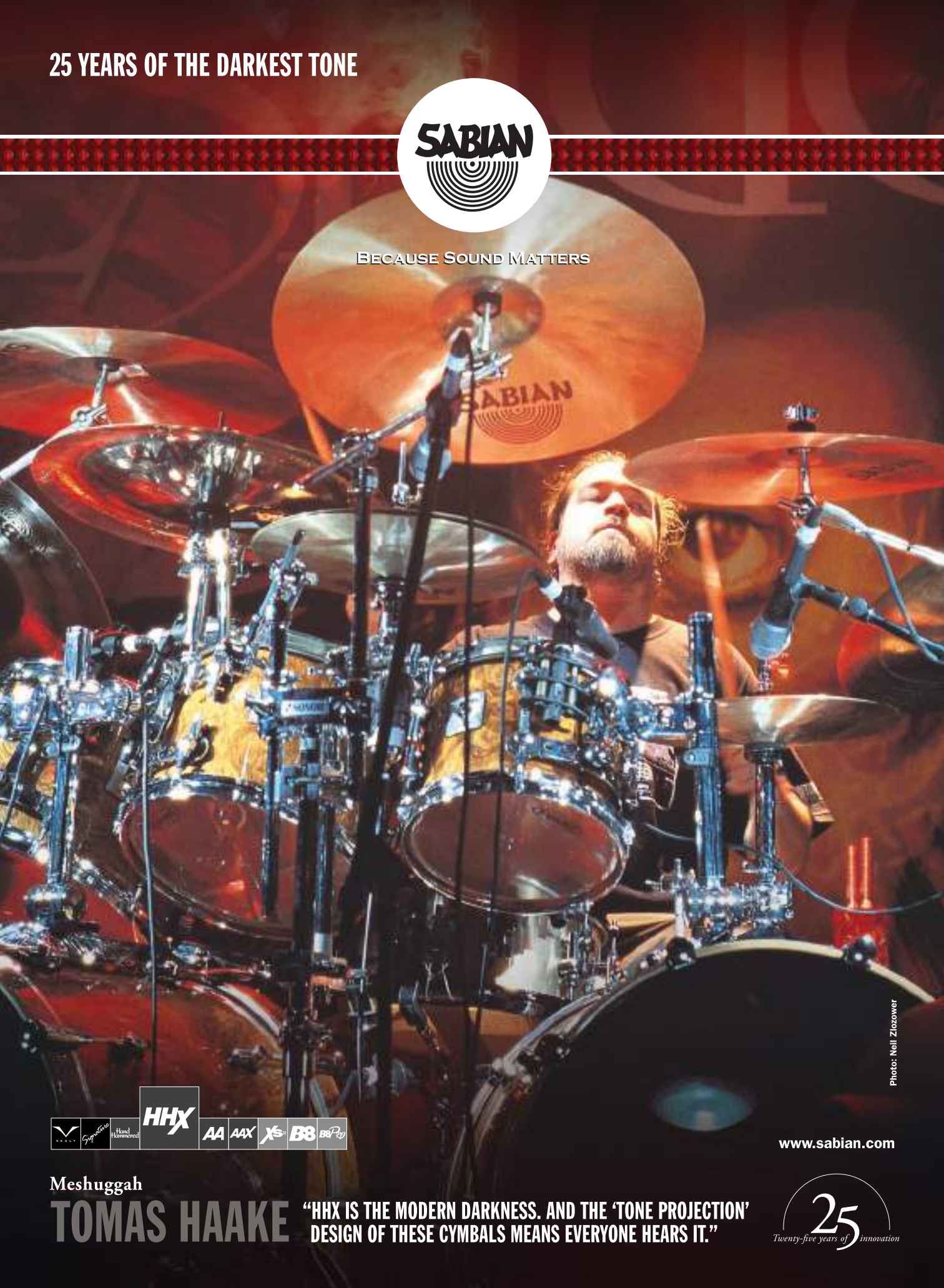

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"HHX IS THE MODERN DARKNESS. AND THE 'TONE PROJECTION' DESIGN OF THESE CYMBALS MEANS EVERYONE HEARS IT."

25 Twenty-five years of innovation

Dave Lombardo

Your interview with Dave Lombardo (September '06) was an insightful look at a man who remains humble despite all he's done for heavy rock drumming. Dave pretty much set the standard that so many of us strive to achieve. Thanks, Dave, and thanks, *Modern Drummer*. **Joseph Rye**

Great interview with Dave Lombardo. It's awesome that, at forty-one, this man is still shredding behind the kit and inspiring countless drummers. **Rick Shirk**

Ignacio Berroa

Thanks for your story on Ignacio Berroa in the September issue. Ignacio is one of the greatest drummers in modern jazz. Those who haven't yet heard him at work must check out his drumming with Dizzy Gillespie, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and other great artists, as well as his superb new solo CD and his brilliant video and books.

I was at a clinic that Ignacio gave recently in Jerusalem. It was pure joy to listen to him play and to answer questions with the same sincerity, humor, and educational value, whether they were coming from professional drummers or from an eight-year-old old boy. Ignacio is the man! **Igor Magarill**

Mike Jachles

Kris Myers

Alex Solca

It's great to see Kris Myers of Umphrey's McGee getting some press. Anyone who hasn't heard that band yet should do his or her ears a favor and give them a listen. All the members—and Myers especially—possess immeasurable musical knowledge that belies their ages. Outstanding article! **Steve Barone**

Defending Ringo

To the "best Ringo tracks" that Rich Pagano listed in his "Defending Ringo" article, I'd like to add Doris Troy's version of Stephen Stills' "Special Care." It's on Doris's self-titled 1970 Apple Records album.

At 0:48 in the tune, Ringo plays a 16th-note fill between the snare and small tom, creating a typically Ringo tumbling triplet feel. The fill goes on for two measures, until Ringo gets slightly ahead and loses it a bit at the end. You can clearly hear him say "Ah!" in cheerful, joyous frustration, after he's made a quick recovery. Buddy Rich could no doubt have played that fill precisely, in his sleep. But that track—including the errant fill—is so filled with energy, and Ringo's playing is otherwise so rock-solid, you just *feel* the music. **Rob Howe**

Chris Pennie Column

Chris Pennie's straightforward approach and articulate instruction [*Strictly Technique*, August '06 *MD*] provides an amazing platform from which to build infinite polyrhythmic ideas. It's no wonder Chris is so intelligently creative with his band. I hope we'll see more from this inspirational drummer in your pages. **Charles William**

Dropped Beat

The September '06 interview with Ignacio Berroa states that one of Ignacio's favorite recordings is John Coltrane's *Blue Train*, featuring drummer Elvin Jones. In fact, Philly Joe Jones played on that recording.

The *New And Notable* item on Sabian's 21" AA Raw Bell Dry Ride in the September '06 *MD* omitted the term "Dry" and listed the price incorrectly. The correct price is $399.

The item on B.Rad Percussion Uglytips in the same issue incorrectly listed the price for the product. The correct price is $3.99 per pair.

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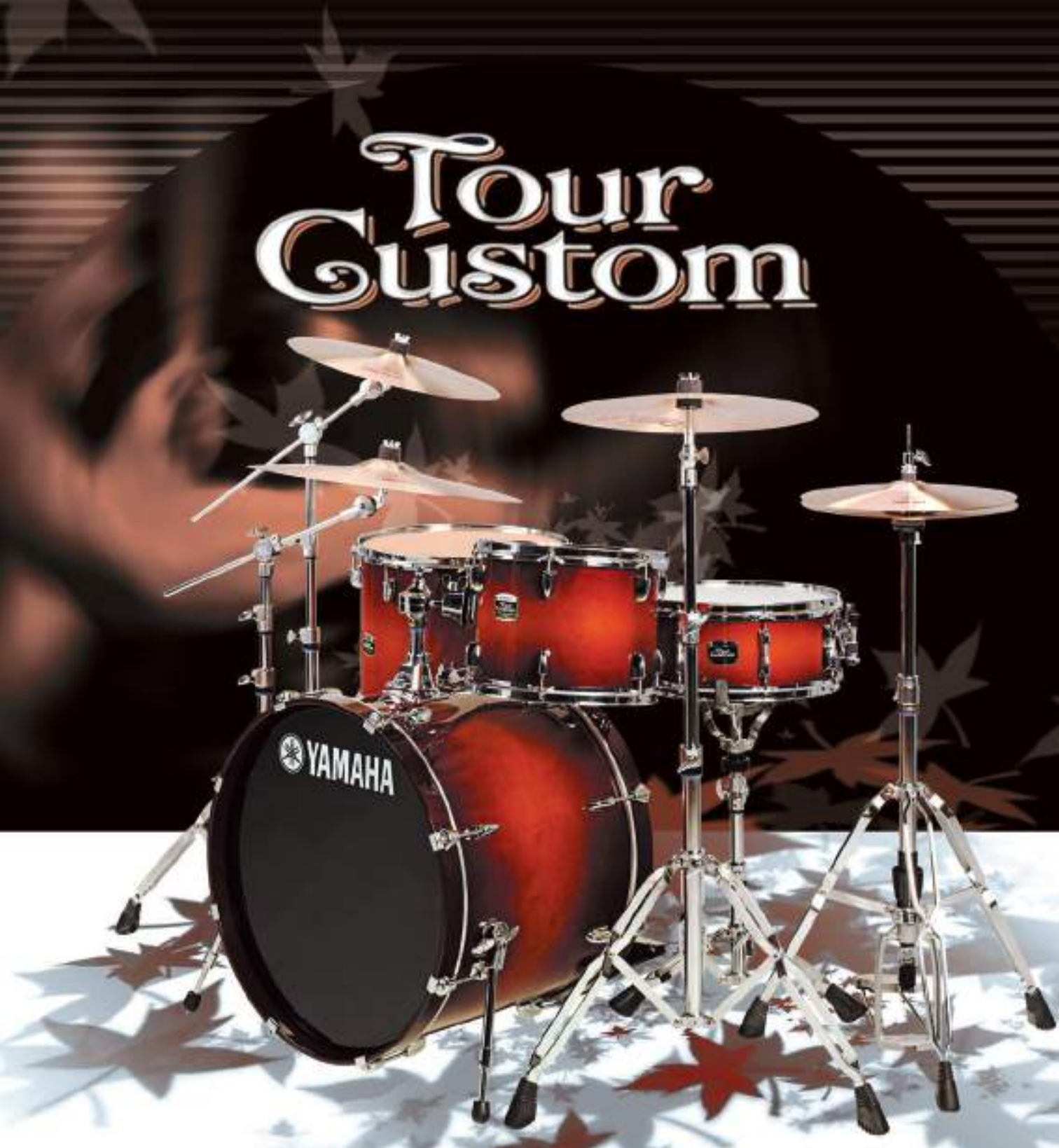

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Clearly Rogers?

I recently acquired an acrylic snare drum that features vintage-looking Beavertail lugs, so I assumed it was a Rogers. But a friend suggested that it might be a Tama drum. There's no badge of any kind on the drum.

Can you tell me the brand and what the drum might be worth? **Dana Crouse**

According to *MD* drum historian Harry Cangany, "There were a few Rogers acrylics made, but this does not appear to be one. No Rogers drum would have late-'60s/early-'70s Japanese parts like the strainer and muffler shown in your photos. The lug casings do look like Rogers, but the screws, seen through the shell, look Asian. The lug nuts are also not Rogers.

"My theory is that this drum was home-assembled. An acrylic snare drum shell has never been the easiest thing to find, so it's possible that a 10x14 or 14x14 tom shell was cut down to make your drum."

Suspending '80s Ludwig Toms

I own a Ludwig Super Classics (Chicago badge) set from the 1980s. It's similar to what KISS's Eric Carr had, with deep-shelled toms ranging from 8" to 18". These heavy, thick-shelled drums resonate beautifully and are as loud as cannons—when I hold them. But put them on a tom mount and the sound dies a horrible death. So I'd like to fit all the toms with suspension mounts.

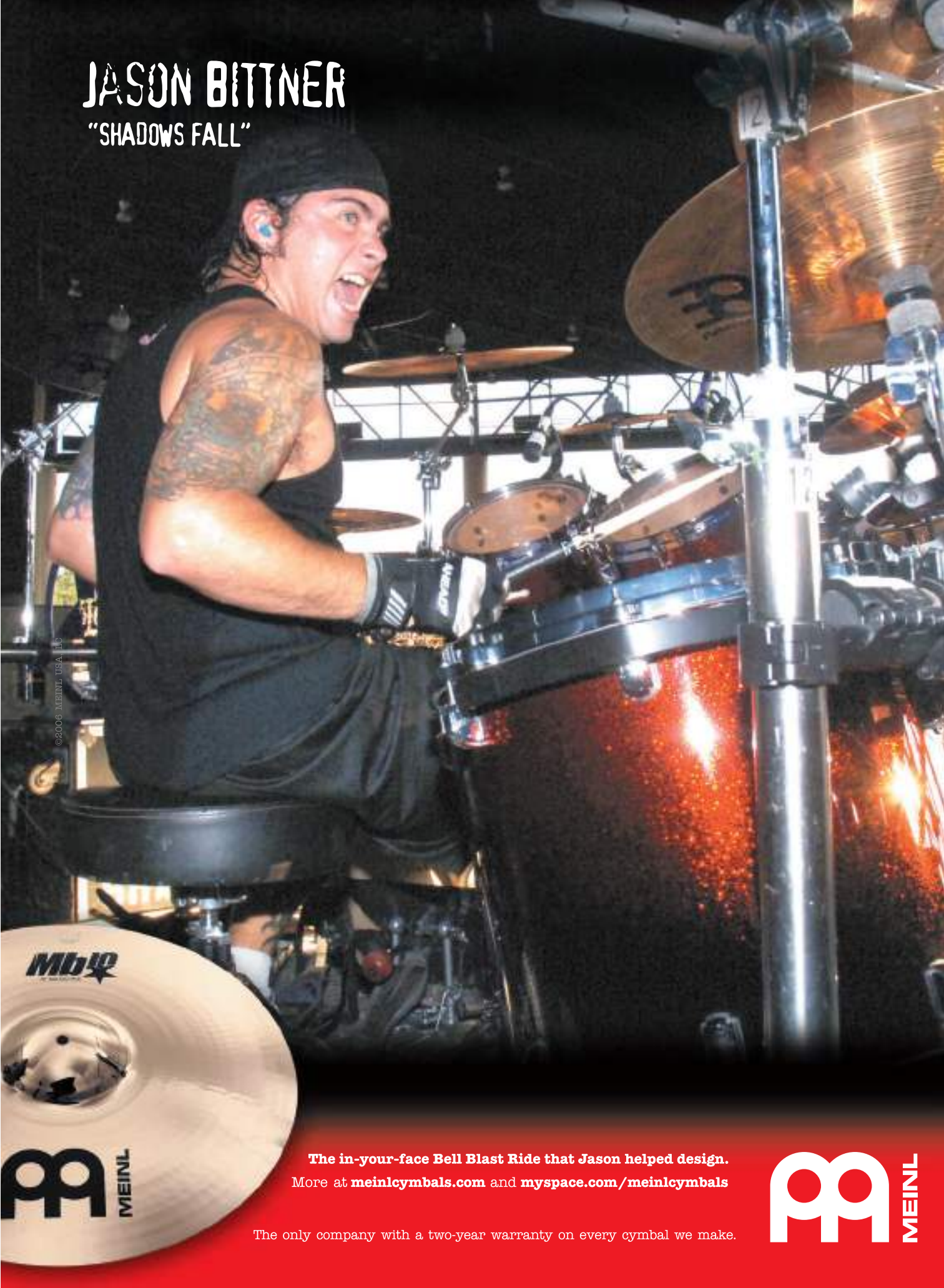
The problem is, the 8" rack tom is four-lug, the 10" and 12" are six-lug, the 13" is eight-lug, the 14" and 15" are ten-lug, and the 16" and 18" floor toms are eight-lug. This gets pretty confusing when I'm looking for suspension mounts. I tried some Pearl I.S.S. mounts a few years ago, but the lug spacing on some of the drums made it impossible to use those mounts. I'd rather have all the same hardware instead of mismatched stuff, so is there anyone that makes suspension mounts that will fit all of my drums? **Bryan Bedgood**

We forwarded your question to Gary Devore, who is the sales coordinator and "spare parts guru" at Ludwig. Gary replies, "In the 1980s, Ludwig offered Classic and Power toms. The Power toms were cut so that the depth was one inch less than the diameter—except for 6"- and 8"-diameter drums, which were 9" deep. Power toms of 12" diameter and larger got two extra lugs. Floor toms were only available as Classic models, in the standard 14x14, 16x16, and 16x18 sizes, so they all had eight lugs.

"I checked our inventory and found that we have suspension mounts available for all but one of your drums: the 15" ten-lug. Since you understandably want a matching set, I suggest that you look at R.I.M.S. Alloy suspension mounts from Gauger Percussion. They have adjustable links that will allow them to fit drums of a given size, regardless of the lug configuration. Gauger makes R.I.M.S. mounts in different lengths for increased stability on certain drums. You can see the product at www.gaugerpercussion.com, or call GPI at (952) 938-0885 to talk about your specific application."

This shot from the 1984 Ludwig catalog illustrates a kit with Power Toms and Modular tom mounts.

Gauger Alloy R.I.M.S. mounts can be configured to fit virtually any drum.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The Tuning Process

I just got a new Pearl Export nine-piece double bass drumset. I've been reading about different ways to tune the drumheads (top and bottom), and I'm getting real confused. I even have a DrumDial, but I can't seem to get the progression of sound from the 8" tom to the 18" floor tom.

I know that other musical instruments are tuned to specific notes. Can that apply to drums, based on their size? I know that how you want your drums to sound is a personal choice, but is there any sort of baseline to start with? **Gloria Cook**

Most drummers don't tune their drums to specific notes. (Drums are considered non-specific pitched instruments.) Instead, they tune to an interval between the drums that they find pleasing. The more drums on the kit, the shorter this interval is likely to be, and the harder it is to get a "perfect blend."

Many drummers tell us that they start with the lowest drum, getting the pitch, tonality, and sustain that they want. Then they work up from there. If you go the other way, it's possible to start the whole process too low, and thus be unable to get any tonality at all out of the 18" floor tom by the time you get down to it.

Using a DrumDial or similar device is a good way to get any one drum "in tune with itself," since the DrumDial measures head tension at each lug point. However, it may not help you to balance each drum's pitch with the next one. That's a "by ear" process that must be learned, just like any other drumming skill.

Here are some references that might provide you with tuning assistance: *The Drumset Crash Course: Tuning Edition* (DVD) by Russ Miller; *Drum Tuning: The Ultimate Guide* (book/CD package) by Scott Schroedl; *Basic Drumset Tuning* (video) by Roy Burns; *Drum Tuning: Sound And Design* (DVD) by Bob Gatzen; and *Drum Tuning* (book) by Larry Nolly.

Roy Burns' video is available from aquariandrumheads.com. All of the other titles are available in many drumshops, or from a variety of online multi-media vendors. You might also want to check out "MD's Guide To Drum Tuning," which appeared in the November 1999 issue. It can be ordered at (973) 239-4140 or via email at sueh@moderndrummer.com.

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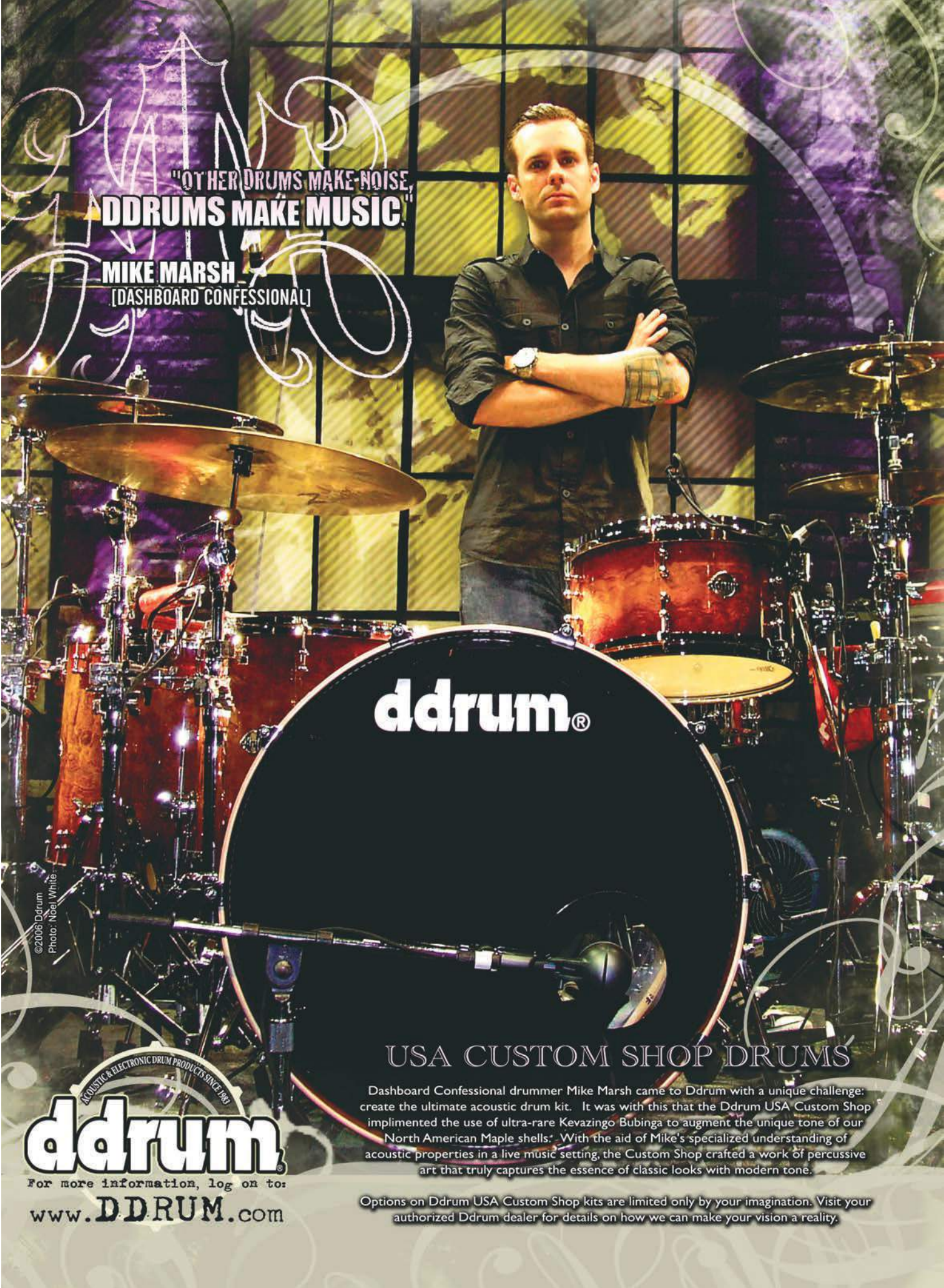

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Drumming On Transatlanticism

Q Your playing on Death Cab's *Transatlanticism* and *Plans* is very beautiful, tasteful, and musical. Thank you for being such an inspiration to my playing.

I have some questions about *Transatlanticism*. How did you come up with the idea to just play 8th notes on the ride and snare for the title track, as opposed to a normal rock beat? Also, how did you pace and time the crescendo so as to not get too loud by the end of the piece?

On the song "Tiny Vessels," what snare drum and hi-hats are you using on the verse/outro section? The entire track sounds very open and reverby. Where and how was that song recorded?

Evan Chapman

A Before I answer the first question, I have to say it's nice to know that there are still drummers who are impressed by individual 8th notes played for seven minutes straight!

Everyone in Death Cab is a big fan of musical tension and repetition—the kind of thing that keeps your ears glued to the speakers because there's just enough subtle change to hold your attention. On "Transatlanticism," what started as a long build between the snare, ride, and kick ended up being the part nobody wanted to give up, even after trying the backbeat thing. The beginning loop fades out as the end drums fade in under it. The drums start out super quiet, building in intensity with each melodic and vocal change. I put up three 22" rides, two bass drums, and the snare, and played them all for the longest crescendo possible. If you listen closely you might hear the melodic phrasing in the cymbal crashes changing throughout.

The form was already established when we recorded the song. So it was done with one rehearsal followed by one take, giving it everything I had. Our producer, Chris Walla, spent more time mixing that song than any other. I'm happy to know it moved you the way we intended it to.

"Tiny Vessels" was recorded at a studio in Seattle that no longer exists. What you're hearing on the album version is three takes all stacked together, with each one recorded at a different tape speed (slow, normal, and fast). I played the first verse fairly quietly, hitting the snare dead center. During the second verse I wanted more intensity, so I played rimshots. But it was the same kit and snare drum from beginning to end. The only thing I changed was the emotional approach, which the lyrics themselves seem to suggest.

The reverb you're curious about was a spring reverb, but I don't remember the make. It's tough to find a good reverb in the digital world, but I know they're out there. The hi-hats I used were a particularly chunky pair of Paiste 15" Dark Energy Mark I's. If I could remember which of many snares I was using on that given day, I'd tell you. But it would be irrelevant, considering the changes in pitch and phase that occur when you stack performances tracked at different speeds. Ahh, the joy of tape!

Big Band Great
Butch Miles'
Tom Mount

Q I'm a huge fan of your traditional big band drumming style. I also dig your setup. In photos of you that I've seen, you seem to be using a tom mounting arm with a pretty long horizontal bar. Can you explain what that is?

Anthony Yohe

A I appreciate your kind words and your question. At first, I wasn't sure I could answer, because to be honest I wasn't sure what kind of tom mount I use. I've been a Ludwig endorser since 1982, and I love the drums, but I've never been good with hardware model numbers and such.

So I checked with Ludwig, who told me that what I have appears to be an LM3001MT Modular single tom holder. That holder comes with a big triangular bracket that goes on top of the bass drum shell, a 17"-long vertical tube that comes up through that bass drum bracket, and a 9"-long horizontal tube to reach out to the tom. This gives me the adjustment in height and horizontal extension I need to mount the rack tom comfortably on the shell of the bass drum.

Thanks again, Anthony—and always swing.

Roland

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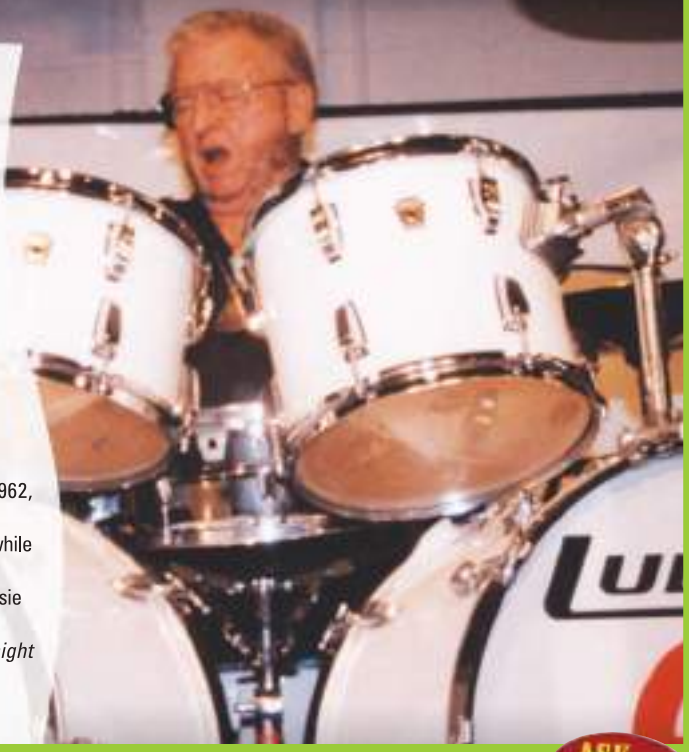
Text and photo by Joe Perry



Place of birth: Jersey City, New Jersey
Influences: Sid Catlett, Buddy Rich, Art Blakey, Louie Bellson
Favorite food: Italian, deli food
Favorite junk food: Pizza
Favorite movies: *Casablanca, Ship Ahoy, To Kill A Mockingbird*
Favorite recording: *Swinging To The Blues*, Doc Severinsen
Favorite up & coming drummer: Eric Harland
Other instruments I play: Piano, vibes, tabla, timpani
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A history teacher
Vehicle I drive: Ford Explorer
Hobbies/interests: Exercising, taking my wife to the movies
How I relax: reading, listening to music
Person I admire: Bill Gates
Biggest venue played: Madison Square Garden, New York City
Most unusual venue played: White House press ball in 1962, met President Kennedy
Most embarrassing moment on stage: Broke a bass drum head while playing with Doc Severinsen in 1985
Musicians I'd like to have worked with: Charlie Parker, Count Basie
Songs I wish I'd played on: Charlie Parker's "Just Friends"
Most memorable performance: With Buddy Rich on *The Tonight Show*, August 1978
Person I'd like to have a conversation with: Jesus

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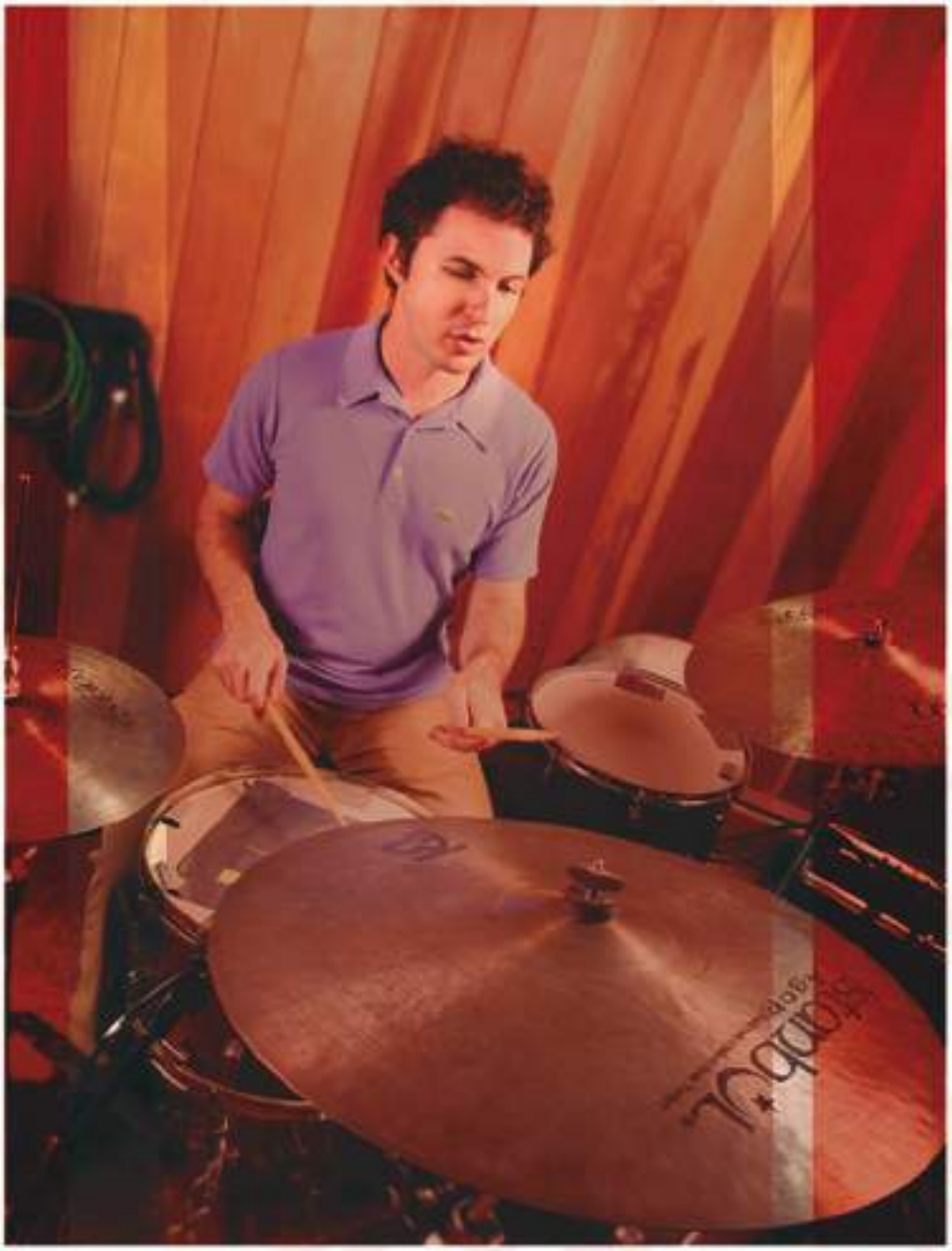

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SUPERST

mike JUSTIAN

UNEARTH

I've played Superstar in five tours over two years–maybe 120, 130 shows–all over the world. This set has done two Ozzfests and numerous European festivals. But I didn't want to say the same old "twice the quality for half the price" stuff. So I wrote this:

If you like getting an entire pizza for the price of a slice,
Or getting a bat as precise as a knife,
If you like getting a super model without having to try,
Get these drums...If you like getting a lot of some thing
for practically nothing.

brian TICHY

BILLY IDOL

We've done a lot of touring since the last half of 2005, and the Superstars have been awesome. I can't say anything but good things about them. In between touring, I've used the Superstars in my studio for everything from rock room sounds to distant mic'ing and all the way to a totally deadened-up kit with 70's-style muted drum tones. The hardware's killer, the snare sounds great, and the 18" floor has the best tone of any 18" I've ever played. But that's what I expected from TAMA. From my high school auditorium stage to Madison Square Garden, TAMAs stood up to it all.

BILLY IDOL
DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND

brann DAILOR

MASTODON

When I hit my bass drum, it's like firing the cannon of death. When I'm doing a roll across the toms, they're like war drums. I've done about 300 gigs. The kit has been all around the world. They've taken a hell of a beating, they always stay in tune, they're very durable drums, and they sound awesome. The Superstars are keepers for sure. I get everything I need out of them.

AR ON TOUR

If you were at *Ozzfest* or *Sounds of the Underground* tour (or you're going to the upcoming *Unearth/Sanctity of Brothers Tour*), you heard and saw TAMA Superstar.

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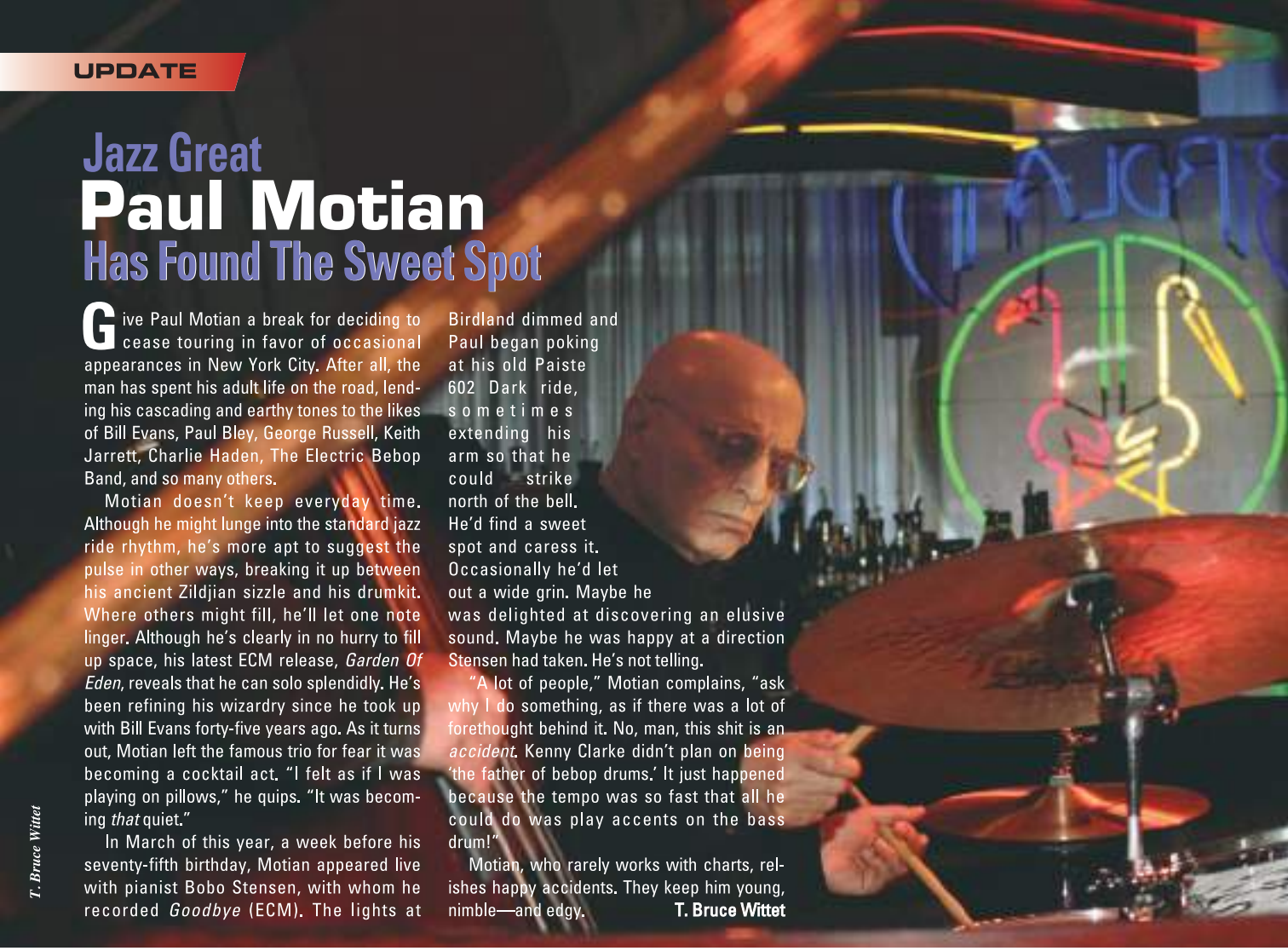
Jazz Great Paul Motian Has Found The Sweet Spot



T. Bruce Wittet

Give Paul Motian a break for deciding to cease touring in favor of occasional appearances in New York City. After all, the man has spent his adult life on the road, lending his cascading and earthy tones to the likes of Bill Evans, Paul Bley, George Russell, Keith Jarrett, Charlie Haden, The Electric Bebop Band, and so many others.

Motian doesn't keep everyday time. Although he might lunge into the standard jazz ride rhythm, he's more apt to suggest the pulse in other ways, breaking it up between his ancient Zildjian sizzle and his drumkit. Where others might fill, he'll let one note linger. Although he's clearly in no hurry to fill up space, his latest ECM release, *Garden Of Eden*, reveals that he can solo splendidly. He's been refining his wizardry since he took up with Bill Evans forty-five years ago. As it turns out, Motian left the famous trio for fear it was becoming a cocktail act. "I felt as if I was playing on pillows," he quips. "It was becoming *that* quiet."

In March of this year, a week before his seventy-fifth birthday, Motian appeared live with pianist Bobo Stensen, with whom he recorded *Goodbye* (ECM). The lights at Birdland dimmed and Paul began poking at his old Paiste 602 Dark ride, sometimes extending his arm so that he could strike north of the bell. He'd find a sweet spot and caress it. Occasionally he'd let out a wide grin. Maybe he was delighted at discovering an elusive sound. Maybe he was happy at a direction Stensen had taken. He's not telling.

"A lot of people," Motian complains, "ask why I do something, as if there was a lot of forethought behind it. No, man, this shit is an *accident*. Kenny Clarke didn't plan on being 'the father of bebop drums.' It just happened because the tempo was so fast that all he could do was play accents on the bass drum!"

Motian, who rarely works with charts, relishes happy accidents. They keep him young, nimble—and edgy. **T. Bruce Wittet**

Scott Rockenfield Master Juggler

Seattle-based drummer Scott Rockenfield could be considered one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the drumming industry. After twenty-five years of gold, platinum, and Grammy-nominated recordings, his classic prog metal band, Queensrÿche, continues to tour worldwide to a legion of loyal fans. And those fans were recently rewarded with the long-awaited *Operation: Mindcrime II* (Rhino), the follow-up to the band's 1988 classic *Operation: Mindcrime*.

Scott also belongs to the mainstream rock project Slave To The System, which has just released its self-titled CD on Spitfire Records. The drummer continues to operate his successful RockenWraps custom drum wrap business with his brother, Todd. And Carl Fischer has just released *Operation: Rockenfield*, a 128-page book featuring transcripts, interviews, and a chronological breakdown of Scott's prolific history with Queensrÿche.

How does Scott keep up? "Juggle, juggle, juggle!" he replies. "I've always had multiple projects. They all help one another in some way. For example, the STTS project is getting offers to tour with Alice Cooper, because STTS guitarist/vocalist Damon Johnson works with Alice. And STTS may play some festivals in Europe with Queensrÿche.

"My approach to drumming with STTS was to let go of the QR style, play for the song, and make it rock," he says. "With QR we tend to nitpick everything to death, which can be constructive. But it's not how we want to do things in STTS."

How involved was Scott in the *Operation: Rockenfield* book? "I'm close to all of my projects," he insists. "They're all important to me. Joe Bergamini assembled the book and was extremely helpful in getting it completed. Craig LeMay was also very helpful in getting it started with his transcriptions. And now we're already discussing the next book."

And what about RockenWraps? "The business has been a great success story for me," Scott says, proudly. "We recently added the Artist Series, which is artwork submitted to us for elite wraps. And we now offer a custom line of 100% maple–shell drums." For more info, go to www.rockenwraps.com.

Of course, Scott has one other priority. "My *main* priority, above all else, is my beautiful wife and our three kids. Now that's really juggling!" **Mike Haid**

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shawn DROVER MEGADETH ON TOUR

With my previous kit, I just never felt comfortable. With the Superstars, I felt comfortable from the get-go. Everything's more compact and closer to the way that I play. The crew and the guys in the band keep telling me how much better the kit sounds. Even fans come up after the show and tell me, "Your drums sounded awesome." The bass drums are extremely punchy, and the kit is crushing in the monitors. It's just unreal. The Superstars are everything I ever wanted drums to sound like. That's the honest truth. No bulls---ing at all.

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"The Superstar kit wowed us with its overall professionalism." *Modern Drummer Magazine* review of 10 competitive drum sets, January 2006.

Abe Fogel

Lighting The Flame With Rob Thomas

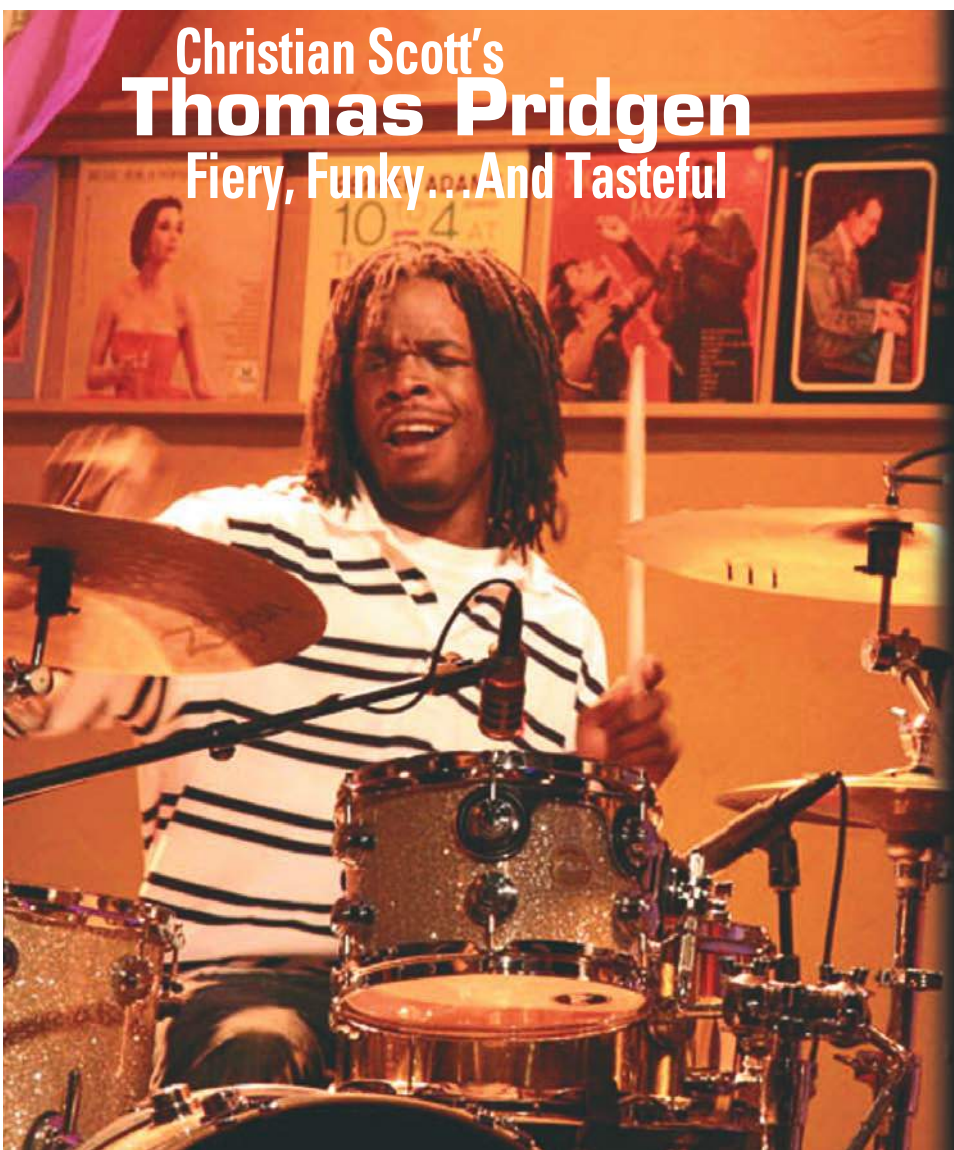
Since the spring of 2005, Abe Fogel has been working with Rob Thomas of Matchbox Twenty fame. Fogel had been working with Ronny Jordan and Alex Bugnon when he got the call to join Thomas. Immediately the drummer set about learning the material that Gerald Heyward had recorded for Thomas's solo album, *Something To Be*.

"When I prepare for a gig," Fogel shares, "I try to go above and beyond in terms of doing the homework. Usually, if somebody gives me a recording and lets me know rehearsals begin in five days, by the end of those five days I know the basic beats and concepts of the tunes. And I'll take it a little further: I sing a little, so I'll use the background vocal parts to help me recognize the forms of tunes."

Taking over a high-profile drum seat is always a delicate situation for a musician. He must figure out his boundaries and freedoms within the material. Did Abe have freedom with Thomas's songs? "Yes and no," he responds, "and I don't mean no in any negative way. I would say there isn't a lot of freedom mainly because I try to be a stickler for the parts. Learn the parts, approach them exactly the way they jump off the CD, and from there, when you go into rehearsal, you leave it to the discretion of the musical director or the artist to tell you what you can add. I always try to approach it as if I were the session player who recorded the album, and from there I may add a couple of my own nuances."

Besides touring with Thomas, Fogel has also been working with Phoebe Snow as well as Ronny Jordan and Alex Bugnon.

Robyn Flans



Christian Scott's Thomas Pridgen

Fiery, Funky...And Tasteful

Just one listen to trumpeter Christian Scott's debut album, *Rewind That* (Concord Records), and you'll be looking to see who the drummer is. Although the name Thomas Pridgen may not be familiar to everyone yet, his deep feel and exceptional technique are certainly changing that. Fresh, sharp, fiery, syncopated, funky, and tasteful all at once, Pridgen's performance is one that begs repeated listens. Pridgen is also both drummer and music director for rising R&B star Keyshia Cole, as well as a seasoned Gospel drummer.

At just twenty-two, Pridgen has more drumming experience than most. Growing up in California, he began drumming at the age of three, made his first recording at eight, and won the Guitar Center DrumOff at nine. Recognizing his talent early on, Thomas's grandmother supported and nurtured his musical growth. Pridgen adds also, "I learned a lot from the guys in church." Thomas would go on to record for the Gospel Music Workshop of America numerous times.

Meanwhile, his mother's record collection offered exposure to jazz. Lessons with instructors like David Garibaldi continually developed his abilities, leading him to a Berklee College of Music scholarship. Along the way, Pridgen met, talked with, and learned from many drumming greats as they came through the Bay Area.

It was at Berklee that Pridgen befriended Christian Scott. "Making music that people will listen to twenty years from now" was the goal in making Scott's album, Pridgen says. "I know how hot this music can be," he adds, stressing that his aim is to capture that sound. "It's important to be tasteful," Pridgen reminds. "You've got three minutes, and you can say something stupid or intelligent."

A surprising mix of technique and enthusiasm, tempered by a deep respect for drummers he's learned from, informs Thomas Pridgen's drumming. With touring, a recent recording session with Eric Gale, and a new DVD out called *Shed Sessionz* that features Pridgen with Tony Royster Jr. and others in a Gospel jam, he's got a *lot* happening.

Martin Patmos

Kevin Estrada

Eighteen Visions'

Trevor Friedrich

Heavy Learning Experience

Trevor Friedrich started playing drums in 1993, out of unusual circumstances. It seems Trevor's father had a beef with the neighbors, and he wanted revenge. "My dad went out and bought all of this music equipment," Friedrich laughs. "None of my brothers or I knew how to play anything. We just set up in the pool house and blared away."

Shift to 2006. Friedrich's band Eighteen Visions (Epic) has just released their self-titled sophomore opus, a mishmash of heavy meets melodic, which then meets metal. Friedrich's drum sounds are Bonham-esque, spastic, and fresh. But what sounds like a drench of reverb throughout the disc isn't the case at all. "None of the drum sounds have any effects on them," Friedrich insists. "It's all just different rooms and sounds. If we wanted a different feel for a breakdown or a soft technical part, we would change everything up, with different kits or snares in different rooms."

Truth be told, the entire recording process for Friedrich turned into a heavy learning experience. "The only recording experience I'd had before this record was in my friend's room," the drummer admits. Then, when the producers of the Eighteen Visions disc told him they wanted to split up recording the drums and the cymbals to get more separation, he was taken aback. "At first it was very weird," Trevor says of the near air-drum experience, "But the groove got tighter because I really had to concentrate. What I had to do was focus on the exact parts that went into each song. During the 'cymbal session,' I was sitting there playing along with only cymbals in front of me."

Several songs on the new disc give Friedrich ample room to explore his groove. The hi-hat nuances on the cut "Truth Or Consequence," for instance, really add flavor. "That tune is focused on the drums, with a repetitive roll pattern," he explains. "I just love how the motion of everything else goes with the drums on that song."

The cut "Black And Bruised" leans on a heavier style. "I really love when I just beat the heck out of my drums," he says. "There are literally three separate drum parts on that song that I get to take out my aggression on, and that's what I like."

Steven Douglas Losey

Ringo Starr and **Roger Taylor** appear on the concert DVD *Band Du Lac*, featuring Eric Clapton, Gary Brooker, Paul Carrack, and Mike Rutherford.

Terry Clarke is on Nancy Wilson's *Turned To Blue*.

Paul Van Wageningen is on Kat Parra's *Birds In Flight*.

Jimmy Cobb is on Geri Allen's *Timeless Portraits And Dreams*.

Tony Braunagel is on *Maria Muldaur Sings Love Songs Of Bob Dylan*.

Josh Freese, **Abe Laboriel Jr.**, **Sean Nelson**, and **Joey Waronker** are all on Nina Gordon's latest, *Bleeding Heart Graffiti*.

Craig Pilo is touring with Frankie Valli.

Steve Hass has been touring this fall with John Scofield and The Manhattan Transfer.

Kevin Robinson is on the latest Viva Voce CD, *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out*.

Brian Young and Fountains Of Wayne are in the studio putting the final touches on the follow-up to their Grammy-nominated album, *Welcome Interstate Managers*. Brian is also on the new America CD, *Here And Now*.

Chad Szeliga is on tour with Breaking Benjamin in support of their latest CD, *Phobia*.

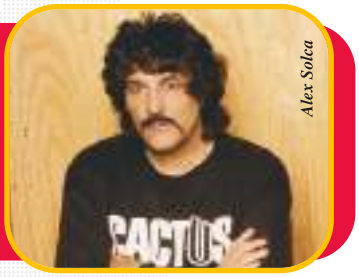
George Pendergast (ex-Dishwalla) recently purchased Mike's Drum Shop in Santa Barbara, California. His current band, Penfifteen Club, recently released a CD. Their song, "Ms. Hilton," is being used as Paris Hilton's theme song on the TV series *Simple Life*.

Ndugu Chancler recently reunited with former bandmate Carlos Santana, received an award from Project MuszEd, taught at the University of California's Young Musicians program, and performed with legendary entertainer Bill Cosby's Cos Of Good septet.

Roots drummer **Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson** joined Hank Williams Jr. and an all-star band, which also included drummer **Angela Webster** (The Believers) for a videotaping of the new *Monday Night Football* opening theme.

Scott Mercado is on tour with Candlebox.

Carmine Appice's solo project, *Ultimate Guitar Zeus*, has been released on Escapi Records. The CD, which was created, produced, and co-written by Appice, features fourteen of the world's greatest guitarists.



Alex Solca

Nashville drummer **Kevin Rapillo** is on tour with country singer Rodney Atkins promoting his hit album, *If You're Going Through Hell*.

Zach Alford has been on tour with Kelly Clarkson.

Bobby Jarzombek is on the upcoming release by Sebastian Bach, *Angel Down*. He's also been touring with Bach. Bobby recently moved to Los Angeles, where he is already breaking into the studio scene. He just recorded tunes for Steven Spielberg and Robert Zemeckis's new animated feature, *Monster House*.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Billy Gladstone was born on 12/15/1892, **Warren "Baby" Dodds** on 12/24/1898, **Tony Williams** on 12/12/45, **Cozy Powell** on 12/29/47, and **Dennis Wilson** on 12/4/44. Wilson passed away on 12/28/83, original Byrds drummer **Michael Clarke** on 12/19/93, and jazz great **Don Lamond** on 12/23/03.

On 12/10/66, **Hal Blaine** played on The Beach Boys' number-1 hit "Good Vibrations."

On 12/2/72, Carly Simon's third album, *No Secrets*, with **Jim Gordon**, **Jim Keltner** and **Andy Newmark**, reaches number-1 in America behind the hit single "You're So Vain." (It featured Jim Gordon.)

On 12/3/81, Robert Zildjian founds the **Sabian** cymbal company.

On 12/14/01, **Vater** launches their International Player's Design Series drumsticks, with a **Steve White** model.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Ed Thigpen (brush master): 12/28/30

Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five): 12/15/42

Allan Schwartzberg (session great): 12/28/42

Alex Acuña (LA session great): 12/12/44

Bobby Colomby (Blood, Sweat & Tears): 12/20/44

John Densmore (The Doors): 12/1/45

Peter Criss (KISS): 12/20/45

Clive Bunker (Jethro Tull): 12/12/46

Carmine Appice (rock great): 12/15/46

Jim Bonfanti (The Raspberries): 12/17/48

Lenny White (fusion master): 12/19/49

Terry Bozzio (drum legend): 12/27/50

Richie Morales (Spyro Gyra, Mike Stern): 12/8/52

Buddy Williams (ex-*SNL*, sessions): 12/17/52

John "JR" Robinson (Barbra Streisand, studio): 12/29/54

Sheila E (drumming star): 12/12/57

Sonny Emory (Earth, Wind & Fire): 12/27/62

Lars Ulrich (Metallica): 12/26/63

Marco Minnemann (Illegal Aliens): 12/24/70

Nate Morton (*RockStar* TV show): 12/30/71

Tre Cool (Green Day): 12/9/72

Josh Freese (session ace): 12/25/72

Terreon Gully (Christian McBride): 12/28/72

Jeremy Hummel (independent): 12/8/73

Samantha Maloney (Hole, Mötley Crüe): 12/14/75

Ned Brower (Rooney): 12/15/77

Larry Aberman (Zumanity), Steve Alexander, Tim Alexander (Primus), Jacob Armen, Ginger Baker (Cream), Michael Baker (Whitney Houston), Travis Barker (Blink 182/+44), Julio Barreto, Eddie Bayers (Recording Legend), Louie Bellson (Jazz Legend), Cindy Blackman (Lenny Kravitz), Brian Blade (Wayne Shorter), Hal Blaine (Recording Legend), Jason Bonham (Foreigner), Cecil Brooks III (Recording Artist), Donny Brown (The Verve Pipe), Mark Brzezicki (Big Country), Lamar Burkhalter, Stuart Cable, Terri Lyne Carrington (Herbie Hancock), Gary Chaffee, Dennis Chambers (Santana), Martin Chambers (The Pretenders), Vinnie Colaiuta (Jeff Beck/Sting), Luis Conte (Legendary Percussionist), Tré Cool (Green Day), Mike Cosgrove (Alien Ant Farm), Denis Courchesne, Kirk Covington (Tribal Tech), Justin DiCioccio (Manhattan School of Music), Zach Danziger, Charley Drayton (Fiona Apple), Aynsley Dunbar, Sonny Emory (Bruce Hornsby), Gary Ferguson, Steve Fidyk, Chuck Fields (Terri Clark), Denny Fongheiser (Recording Artist), Al Foster (Jazz Legend), Joe Franco (Van Helsing's Curse), Alfredo Golino, Ben Gramm (Recording Artist), Andy Granelli (The Distillers), Kerry Griffin (Maxwell), Myron Grombacher, Bob Gullotti (The Fringe), Trilok Gurtu, Billy Hart (Jazz Legend), Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters), Tim Haines (Phil Vassar), Kevin Hayes (Robert Cray), Roy Haynes (Jazz Legend), Horacio Hernandez, Giovanni Hidalgo (Legendary Percussionist), Greg Hutchinson (Joshua Redman), Victor Indrizzo (Gnarls Barley), Laurie Jenkins (Howie Day), Willie Jones, Manu

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GMS SE White Ash Drumkit

Beauty...And Personality

by Will Romano

KEY NOTES

- Toms have great tone and pop
- Floor toms are resonant and throaty
- Kick has unusual voicing
- Suspended tom mounting system could cause space problems

Though I'd never played a GMS kit prior to this review, I'd heard raves over the years from drummers. Let's see if the hype holds up.

The Pick-Up

As it happens, I live fairly close to the GMS facility in Farmingdale, New York. So instead of having our review kit shipped to me, I was able to go to the factory and pick the kit up personally. I was welcomed by GMS co-founder and president Tony Gallino, who directed me to a large back office, where a six-piece Special Edition White Ash kit had been set up for me.

The kit looked simply gorgeous. Its Flame Gold lacquer finish virtually radiated intensity. The setup included 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, an 18x22 kick, and an 8-ply $5^1/_2$x14 snare with standard 2.3-mm hoops. (We were also given a $6^1/_2$x14 snare with die-cast hoops for review.) Each of the two rack toms was suspended separately from one of GMS's G3000 series cymbal stands; the floor toms had legs. The kit was completed with a hi-hat stand and an extra cymbal stand.

GMS states that white ash produces a sound that is less flat and dark than other woods—and more reflective. While I personally did not have the opportunity to "A-B" the ash shells against maple or birch equivalents, Tony Gallino explained that Nir Z (John Mayer) did test white ash and maple kits with the same specifications. "Nir is a guy who can play the same thing twice, perfectly," Gallino says. "We recorded both kits, and you could definitely hear that the white ash had a livelier tone."

GMS vice-president Rob Mazzella adds, "We experimented with different types of ash, including swamp ash. For depth, articulation, and sustain, nothing touched Keller's VSS-enhanced North American hard white ash shells. So that's what we're using."

All of that looks great on a publicity release. But reality is the ultimate equalizer. After pounding on the drums for a few minutes, my first impressions were a bit mixed. The drums *felt* good to play on, and I knew the kind of care that was put into making them. But initially I didn't get a sense of superior dynamics, true focus (as I'd expect from ash), or even the unique sound quality that GMS has been known for.

After I finished my first test, GMS workers and I carefully packed up the drums for

The White Ash kit uses GMS's original suspension mounting system for the rack toms.

transport. As I drove off, I ruminated on my first impressions of the kit, wondering how it would perform under intense playing. I'd soon find out.

Kick Ash Kit

When I played the drums outside the confines of the GMS office, I realized that my first impression was *waaay* off. The toms produced powerful, multi-pitch "pops," with such focus and depth that I could almost produce a melody on them.

To further test the limits of the rack tom shells, I began hitting rimshots, which produced a discernible throaty tone, as well as the normal "punch to the gut" vibrations associated with a hard stroke. Bouncing as they did from their suspension mounts (which I'll explain in more detail later), the toms had serious volume and clarity. They also managed to stay in tune even after extended usage, which I found impressive.

The kick was fitted with an Evans EQ4 clear batter head with a clear beater-impact pad. The drum sounded focused and responsive, thanks to its echo-chamber internal reflectivity. In fact, its sound seemed more like that of a large, melodious tom that penetrated the lower frequencies than that of an average "dry thump" bass drum.

Both snare drums we tested featured 20-strand carbon-steel wires, which contributed to the sensitivity of the drums. The larger snare had a loud, biting ring that I decided *not* to dampen, since that surely would have killed all of the other nuances of the drum. Playing on the edges around the head, then close to the center, and then at dead center produced three very distinct tones. Strokes that normally might have been indiscernible were clearly defined.

I used the snares on a live gig that was recorded via the venue's FOH mixing board. The $5^1/_2$x14 snare, especially, had distinctive cut-through power and a shotgun-like rimshot with an echoing presence—even on an imbalanced recording.

Killing Floor Toms

The floor toms are the greatest assets of the GMS kit. They produced low, sustained rumbles that shook the very ground under me. Perhaps it was the 8-ply shells, or the undulating Evans single-ply Genera G1 coated heads, but I could barely get them to shut up, even with the quickest of flams. (I might have switched to double-ply clear heads on top for a chunkier sound, but the G1s did the job for me.)

The resonance and power of these toms on legs made me wonder what they would have sounded like had they been suspended. Rob Mazzella tells me that if a drummer so desires, the same size toms can be mounted on a double-tom stand via GMS's suspension system.

About The Hardware...

Speaking of the GMS suspension system, it uses a semicircular metal bracket attached to a stabilizing mechanism that touches the drumshell at only one point (via a plastic clip-hinge that fits snugly against the bottom rim). The suspension bracket is held in place by two of the drum's tension rods, which are threaded through the bracket's rubber stoppers. On our review kit, the suspension system allowed the rack toms to move freely under impact, which I believe contributed to their sonic boom and projection.

Although the kit we reviewed was technically a shell pack, with stands available separately, I did have a problem with the 3000 series cymbal/tom stands that GMS provided. When I placed the 12" tom and a 20" ride on one of them, it felt a bit shaky, even after I expanded the tripod base a bit. That stand, at least, seemed overburdened.

Also, to my mind, requiring two stands to suspend the rack toms—each of which must use a wide base in order to hold its load with stability—clutters the physical playing ground around the kit. On the other hand, GMS's "super tilter" technology allows for greater positioning flexibility than bass drum–mounted toms could offer.

A Perfect 10?

Well, not quite. But while I might have had one or two minor issues with the hardware, the sound produced by these drums is what really sticks out in my mind—and ultimately, what counts. If you're looking for a dead, nondescript slap, these are *not* the drums for you.

GMS is nearing its twentieth anniversary, and it still proudly wears its "custom drummaker" badge—delivering personal service and fine craftsmanship to big-name endorsers and local gigers alike. If you've got da bucks, the GMS White Ash kit is a good investment.

Lugs feature quick-release hinged tension rods.

THE NUMBERS

$5^1/_2$x14 snare	$970
$6^1/_2$x14 snare	$1,150
(reflects $160 additional cost for die-cast hoops)	
7x10 rack tom with suspension system	$775
8x12 rack tom with suspension system	$845
14x14 floor tom	$1,175
16x16 floor tom	$1,280
18x22 bass drum	$1,990

(631) 293-4235, www.gmsdrums.com

Paiste 2002 Paperthin And Wild Crashes

New Sounds From A Classic Line

by Chris DiGirolamo

KEY NOTES

- Paperthin crashes have surprising cut for their weight
- 16" Paperthin has splash-like short sustain
- Wild crashes have distinctive tonality
- 19" and 20" Wilds can work as crash-rides

Paiste cymbals have always made me raise an eyebrow. I've been impressed with Paiste's "out of the ordinary" designs, as well as their understanding of what drummers might be missing for different performance and recording situations.

Paiste's latest development involves new models in the time-tested 2002 line. These include Paperthin crashes in 16", 18", and 20" sizes, and—at the other end of the volume scale—Wild crashes in 17", 18", 19", and 20" versions. Let's take a look at both.

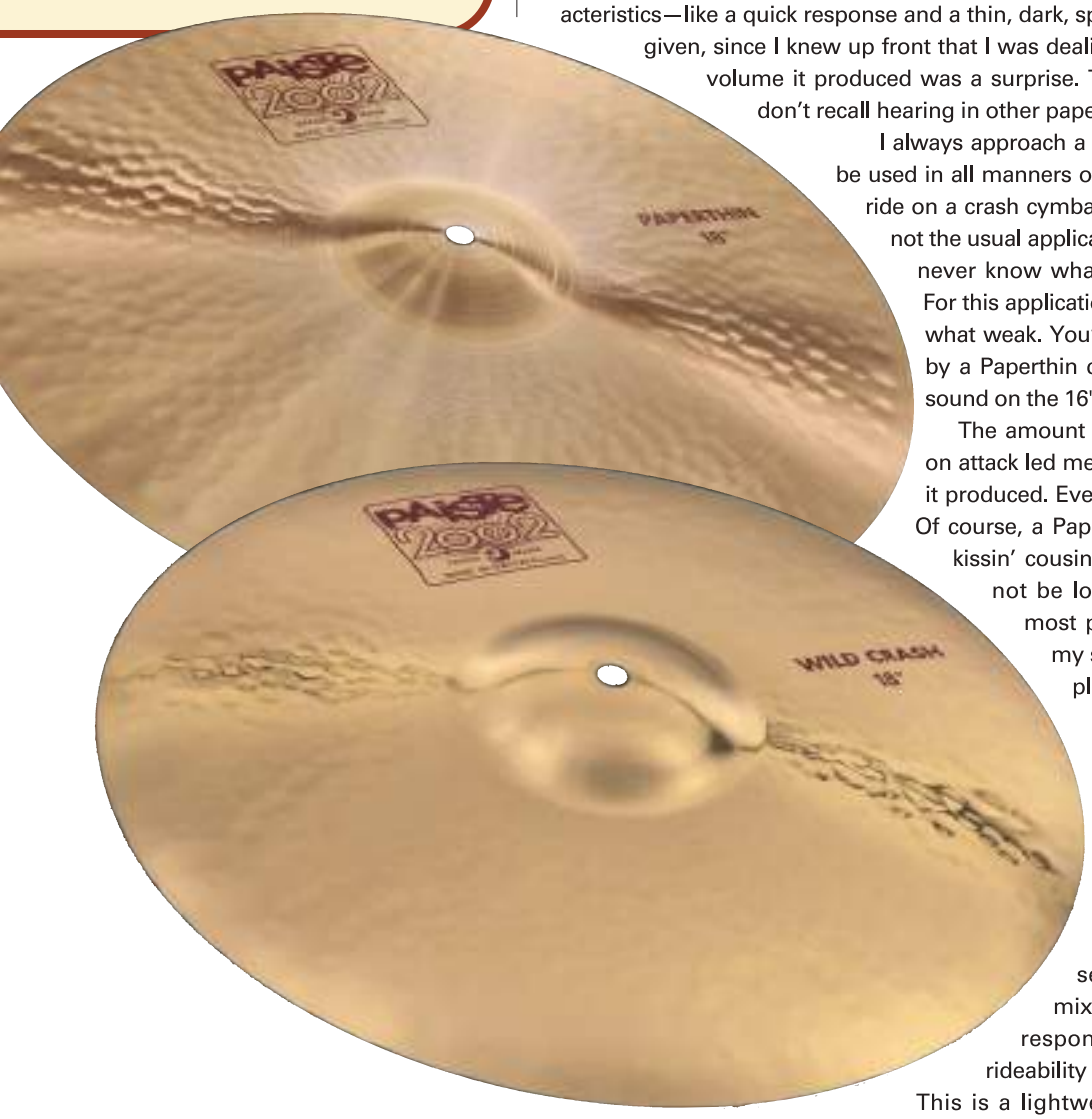
Paperthin Crashes

After placing the 16" crash in my setup and playing it for a while, I came to the conclusion that it did several things I expected, and several that I didn't. Weight-oriented characteristics—like a quick response and a thin, dark, splashy tonality—were pretty much a given, since I knew up front that I was dealing with a Paperthin model. But the volume it produced was a surprise. The 16" crash exhibited a cut that I don't recall hearing in other paper-thin designs.

I always approach a cymbal with the mindset that it will be used in all manners of play—which means I'll sometimes ride on a crash cymbal, no matter its size. Granted, this is not the usual application for a 16" crash cymbal, but you never know what creative inspiration may hit you. For this application, the 16" Paperthin seemed somewhat weak. You'd expect the stick sound generated by a Paperthin crash to be washy, but I found that sound on the 16" to be a little *too* washy.

The amount of cut that the 16" crash generated on attack led me to expect a little more sustain than it produced. Even on a mallet roll, it came up short. Of course, a Paperthin crash can be considered the kissin' cousin of a splash cymbal, so you might not be looking for sustain from it. For the most part I enjoyed using this cymbal in my setup. With the right attack from the player, it works very well.

When I played the 18" Paperthin crash, I found a new love. Even with its light weight, its fairly large size keeps it upfront and cutting. In a rock setting, the sound provides fierce intensity—more than you might imagine for such a thin model. I used it for several tracks, and its place in the mix was right on target. On the stick-response side, there was a pronounced rideability that was missing on the 16" model. This is a lightweight cymbal with a giant sound, which is something one doesn't often come across.



The 20" Paperthin crash is an attention-grabbing cymbal that I think will appeal to a select few. It has a moderate amount of weight due to its size, and it generates a large, sustained sound that would fit into very specific setups and musical situations. The stick sound is that of a weak ride cymbal, but the intensity and sustain on a crash attack will cut through any large band sound.

Wild Crashes

If you're looking for a general-purpose, classic crash sound, these are *not* your cymbals. Paiste describes them as possessing "an aggressive mid-range attack, with a cold, hard wash supporting it." After listening to the cymbals, I couldn't have said it better.

The 17" Wild Crash is cutting and "in your face," letting it function perfectly as a main accent crash. The stick sound is distinct if needed, but I have a feeling you won't be doing much riding on this baby. The sustain falls in the medium range. The sound cuts through in a big way, but closes down after a short few moments. This presence, coupled with a large bell for extra power, makes for a crash cymbal to be reckoned with.

With its large bell and medium-heavy body, the 18" Wild Crash has a distinct and somewhat dark tone. This is a meat-and-potatoes crash that's liable to be popular on the hard rock circuit. The sustain is medium to long, and the intensity is powerful to say the least.

With the 19" model we move into the crash/ride zone. What we have here is a meaty cymbal with a huge crash sound that is distinct and full of intensity. On the ride side, the stick sound is right up there with the best crash/ride models. In fact, this cymbal does what many are not able to accomplish. As a crash, its fierce sound cuts through the music but maintains a level that doesn't overtake other areas. As a ride, it's crystal clear, with a gorgeous bell tone.

The 20" Wild Crash had all the positive features of the 19" size, but with a little more volume on the crash and a thicker ride sound. I gave this cymbal a run for its money in each application, and it kept up with me the whole way.

Conclusion

The 2002 Paperthin crashes are quite impressive. A few small aspects made me shrug my shoulders, but overall they offer top-notch design and surprising performance.

The 2002 Wild crashes are wild indeed. They, too, have an impressive design and a distinctive sound. But their unique sonic qualities definitely call for a sit-down-and-listen tryout to see if the line is for you.

Kudos to Paiste for the creation of some genuinely original instruments.

THE NUMBERS

16" Paperthin crash	$282
17" Wild crash	$308
18" Paperthin and Wild crashes	$342
19" Wild crash	$364
20" Paperthin and Wild crashes	$396

(800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

AHEAD 6x13 BLACK ON BRASS

HOW'S IT SOUND?

This is one of the most musical-sounding metal snare drums I've ever played. It's loud enough to cut through just about anything, yet it produces an ear-friendly tone that won't cause your bandmates to twitch in pain with each rimshot. Even at a medium tension—where the batter head felt great to play on—I didn't have to fight to keep the drum from disappearing in a mix of noisy bass and guitar. The drum also sounded awesome tuned way up, where it let out a strong and present "pop." Snare response was very sensitive at all dynamic levels (thanks to the 24-strand Fat Cat snares), and the rotating Dunnett throw-off is one of the finest designs on the market. The drum also came shipped in a high-quality Protection Racket bag that should withstand the abuse of even the most ruthless roadies.

One additional thing worth mentioning: If you play a lot of rimclicks, you may want to opt for one of the 14" drums (6x14 and 4x14 models are available). It was a little difficult to find the sweet spot on this one because of its small diameter and because the S-Hoops extend about $^1/_2$" into the surface of the head.

Michael Dawson

WHAT'S IT COST?

6x13 with Dunnett throw-off	$419.99
matching Protection Racket case	$49.99

www.bigbangdist.com

To hear this drum, log on to www.moderndrummer.com

Updated Gibraltar Hardware

High-Performance Pedals And Pipes

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- Wide range of Intruder pedal choices
- Chromed rack has a great look
- Heavy-duty hardware offers stability but adds weight

Gibraltar is known for offering high-quality pedals, stands, and rack systems at reasonable prices. They recently redesigned and improved several of their models. Let's see what the upgrades have to offer.

Intruder Pedals

Right out of the box, these pedals are impressive. The new design is fresh, clean, and deadly serious. Since we all have different ideas of what works for us, Gibraltar has come up with three drive styles that should suit just about everyone. I'll start off with the features that are common to the line.

Cutouts in the aluminum footboards reduce their weight and give them a sharp-looking appearance. The Rock baseplate on each pedal has a built-in bead along the bottom for strength. The plate is also made of aluminum, with hook-and-loop strips on its underside to grab a drum rug.

Direct-drive double pedal

The upright arms of the yoke slope back very slightly. Gibraltar has determined that this optimizes the axis of the beater. Ball bearings on the axle and at the top of the spring connection keep the motion of the Intruder pedals smooth. The footboard height is adjustable independent of the spring tension and beater stroke.

A tool holder underneath the footboard secures two Allen wrenches and a drumkey. These let you make adjustments to beater height, angle, placement, and pedal stroke. The axle for the beater features a knurled section that gives a secure feel when setting the stroke. Three reference lines on the axle next to the clamp help you make small adjustments.

The beaters are double-sided, with felt on one side and hard plastic on the other. The memory lock on the beater arm does more than secure the shaft length you choose. It also speeds setup, because you must remove the beater in order to place the pedal in the included carrying case.

A convenient thumbscrew mounted on the side of the Rock plate tightens the clamp onto the bass drum hoop. A movable block on the upper part of the clamp allows you to set it for the thickness of your bass drum hoop. Two spurs in the bottom plate help to keep the pedal in place.

Strap-drive single pedal

The double versions of the pedals feature slave units with the same design as the primary pedals. They're connected by an axle with two universal joints. The axle can be adjusted between 14" and 20", with drumkey bolts at each end to lock down the length. The axle and the beaters must be removed in order to pack the pedals into the supplied case.

Double-chain single pedal

Pedal Performance

My comments about the pedals' performance apply to the single and double versions alike. To begin with, the 9611 Strap Drive system has a light feel and lightning-quick action. The strap contains Kevlar, so I can't imagine it stretching or breaking. The pedal's response made it feel like it was an extension of my foot.

The 9611 Dual Chain Drive system was just as responsive. The dual chain lies in a felt-lined channel that makes it smooth and quiet. It appears to be more of a circular sprocket drive than the traditional eccentric cam, but the response was sure and quick.

The 9611 Direct Drive system uses a solid metal connection from the footboard to the beater. This pedal has a cam drive as opposed to a sprocket type. This means that the beater accelerates right before it hits the head. It felt great!

All three pedal systems offered solid performance that was quiet and powerful. Whatever "feel" you're seeking, you should be able to find it among these three designs.

Hi-Hat Stands

The three hi-hat stands we tested came from Gibraltar's heavy-duty (and heavyweight) 9000 series. Each had a five-point step-tension spring adjustment ring to personalize the feel, and each had hinged memory locks with wingscrews for the stand height adjustment.

The pedals are stabilized by Rock plates under the footboards, similar to those on the

bass drum pedals. This plate secures to the yoke by means of two drumkey screws on the side, reinforced by a second, locking plate on top. This creates a totally rigid assembly. For pack-up you simply loosen the two side screws, slide the locking plate away from the yoke, and fold the plate flat against the collapsed stand.

The first stand I tried was the 9607DL-DP Dual-Leg Hi-Hat with Gibraltar's direct-pull system. "Dual-Leg" might be a misnomer, since Gibraltar adds a small third leg for greater stability. The two main double-braced legs rotate together while the smaller rotates independently, so you can tailor their position relative to other pedals or stand legs.

Gibraltar's direct-pull system employs a universal joint to make the connection between the footboard and the pull shaft. The response was silent and smooth. In addition, the "travel" of the pull rod from full up to full down provided plenty of room between the cymbals, which I prefer. Not everyone wants lots of space between their cymbals, but I'd rather have too much and cut back than wish for more.

Gibraltar also sent along their 960NL-DP, which is a no-leg version of the direct-pull hi-hat stand for use with a rack, or attached to a second bass drum. Other than the absence of legs, it was identical to the 9607DL-DP, and performed in the same way.

Our third test stand was the 9607ML-LD Moveable Leg hi-hat. It features a full tripod that can rotate as a unit to allow for adjacent pedal positioning. Gibraltar knew what they were doing when they named this baby "Liquid Drive." A short chain that lies on a felt-lined channel connects with the pull rod through a set of hinges and universal joints. The rod moves dead straight, since the action of the pedal is translated into vertical motion. The goal of the Liquid Drive design is to produce an equal feel for the downstroke and the upstroke, and it does a stunning job. The action of this pedal was the smoothest I've ever felt.

Foundation Tripod With Double L-Rod Plus Cymbal Mount

The 9813DP Foundation Tripod stand is designed to help players minimize the number of floor stands in their setups. The stand itself is relatively compact, but it stands on double-braced legs and wide feet when opened. The stand can go as low as 18" and as high as 32".

The stand's upper "platform" features two receivers for ball-style L-arms. Gibraltar offers those arms in four different sizes to fit just about any brand of drums. There is also a third receiver for holding a cymbal arm.

The stability of the stand encouraged me to mount lots of arms on it. It was slightly on the heavy side, but this is Gibraltar's heavy-duty line, and the Foundation Tripod is specifically designed to hold a lot of instruments. So the weight makes sense in this application. Gibraltar offers lighter hardware if that's what you're looking for.

Road Series Curved Chrome Rack

The GRS-420CC is Gibraltar's latest addition to their Road Series rack collection. It has two new features that set it apart from their regular offerings. First of all, the 36" upright tubes and the 46" connecting tube between them are curved. This creates a sweeping effect with a modern look. It also gives the impression that the rack is bringing the toms and cymbals back to you.

The only downside to this all-curved design is that anything clamped to the upright tubes in a standard 90° clamp is going to come off at an odd angle. That doesn't mean that such clamping is impossible, but it will call for some creative thinking when it comes to connecting things.

The other new feature of the rack is that it is entirely chromed, including the tubes and all the fittings. This gives the rack a striking appearance that blends nicely with chromed boom arms and tom holders. The chromed fittings include Gibraltar's Multi Clamps, Right Angle and T-leg Clamps, and Hinged and Standard memory locks, all of which lose none of their reliability in exchange for their spiffed-up looks.

Wrap-Up

Gibraltar seems to have done their homework in designing this hardware. The rack looks great while holding drums and cymbals securely and conveniently. The Foundation Tripod stand is secure, and has the stability to hold a load of toms and accessory arms. The Intruder pedals are pure dynamite. They offer full adjustability, plus they cover all the bases—or should that be basses?—that different players could want.

THE NUMBERS

9611DC Dual-Chain Single Pedal	$189.79
9611DC-DB Dual-Chain Double Pedal	$450.79
9611SD Strap-Drive Single Pedal	$189.79
9611SD-DB Strap-Drive Double Pedal	$450.79
9611DD Direct-Drive Single Pedal	$189.79
9611DD-DB Direct-Drive Double Pedal	$450.79
9607DL-DP Direct-Pull Dual-Leg Hi-Hat	$209.79
9607ML-LD Liquid Drive Movable-Leg Hi-Hat	$209.79
960NL-DP Direct Pull No-Leg Hi-Hat	$159.79
9813DP Foundation Tripod Stand	$155.79
GRS-420CC Curved Chrome Rack	$519.99

(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com

Dream Cymbals

One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure

by T. Bruce Wittet

KEY NOTES

- Affordable yet pro-quality B20 alloy cymbals
- Diverse range of sounds
- All hi-hats are matched extremely well
- Bliss series offers stunning, trashy sounds

In forty years of drumming, I've rarely encountered a group of cymbals as diverse as these. And it's all good.

Dream cymbals are made in China, from B20 bronze alloy. They're imported by the Canadian company Mountain Rythym, who has heretofore been known primarily as makers of premium hand drums. The three Dream lines range from fairly accurate replications of "Western style" cymbals to wildly hammered thin plates that wobble like a floppy hat in a windstorm. The folks at Mountain Rythym sent *MD* selections from each of those lines.

E For Energy

The Dream E series cymbals boast an even, "finished" appearance that compares well with that of American and European brands. I started with the 20" crash-ride, and I enjoyed its pleasant, shimmering tone and good sustain. The bell was strong without exhibiting any jarring qualities. The ride characteristics were similar to many name-brand medium rides, with the addition of an underlying exotic "Chinese" component. I'd be happy using this cymbal on any gig from country to pop, although I doubt it would cut a metal gig except as a crash.

The 16" E series crash was bright in pitch, with a quick explosion and a fast decay. Again, a slight exotic timbre lurked in the background, affording a little extra tonal body. Although I didn't record the cymbal, I'd gladly add it to the cymbals I reserve for that purpose.

The Energy 14" hats were relatively bright in tone and quick in response. They yielded nicely clipped open and closed patterns when played with sticks, and had a solid chick.

Finally, the 10" splash was everything a splash should be: bright but not clangy, full in bandwidth, and capable of quick accents (and even mallet rolls).

Full Contact

The Contact (or C series) cymbals are quite obviously made by hand. In fact, one 22" ride looked similar to a Turkish-made hand-hammered cymbal I purchased as a young drummer in the 1970s. The Dream model featured relatively deep lathe impressions set about ¼" apart, atop a surface indented with narrow- and wide-peen hammer blows.

That 22" cymbal was marked as a crash-ride. After lifting the thing, I was puzzled. It weighed seven pounds...what sort of crash could I hope to get from such a beast? But when I looked closer, things began to make sense. First off, the bell was disproportionately large. Large bells promote crash power and sustain. In addition, the otherwise heavy ride was surprisingly thin around the edges, which is another crash-promoting feature.

This cymbal intrigued me. It had me playing straight-8th Euro-jazz ride patterns, and being rewarded by a crystalline ping. It also had a remarkable ability to open up for short crash punctuations. Yet when I played the cymbal at a rockabilly gig using 5Bs, it held its own against a particularly loud guitarist. The ride sound was penetrating, while the rotund crash stopped traffic. And while the large bell provided a good target, it was not obtrusive in tone.

The 20" C series ride featured slightly less hand hammering than its larger sibling. The bell was more in proportion to the cymbal's diameter, and the weight was medium as opposed to heavy. Again, the body tapered from thick bell and bow to thin edges. This cymbal began to wobble fiercely as I laid into it. The Contact 18" crash was simply serviceable, with good projection and not overly long decay.

The C series 14" hats were well matched, emitted a

good chick, and responded well to sticks for open/closed patterns. When I played them on a loud pop gig, I particularly liked the way I could ride them with both cymbals barely touching, producing a consistent sizzling swish. And finally, the C series splash was a nice bit of work, with perhaps a hint more trashiness than the E series model.

Heavenly Bliss

The Bliss, or B series, is, in my opinion, the flagship of the entire Dream cymbal catalog. These cymbals remind me of a cross between older Turkish cymbals and certain Oriental copies of Western cymbals I'd seen in the '80s. The feel is soft, the response is immediate, and the undertones are thundering.

All Bliss cymbals feature a fairly flat profile, which lends a low fundamental pitch. Whereas some Western cymbals are pressed into shape hydraulically and then hammered, I'm told that B series cymbals are completely hammered into shape.

Because of the eccentricities inherent in intensive hand labor, Bliss cymbals have areas of inconsistent thickness, which I would call "sweet spots." Some of the review "rides" revealed five or six such spots. I put the word rides in quotes because the cymbals are not designated as such. They're stamped only with their diameter on the underside, and "Gaojiahe Gong Factory, Made In Wuhan China" along with some Chinese characters on top. Bells are of modest size, while the lathing is light, narrow, and tightly packed. Although this lathing style tends to minimize harmonics and provide focus, focus is not the strongest point of this line. Rather, the appeal lies in an extremely guttural, trashy, and exotic response.

I brought a set of B series cymbals to a jazz trio gig: a 22", a 20", and 14" hats. The first time I gently rode the 22", the pianist remarked on the "strange overtones." I shut him up by repositioning the cymbal lower than his ear level. The bass player's comment was, "Cool!"

Even at extremely quiet dynamics, the 22" cymbal spoke clearly. Each note from my 5A wood-tip sticks was clean and clear. As we ramped up the excitement level, the cymbal began to undulate. I mean, it really wobbled at the edges, and with that wobble came an undercurrent of smoky, trashy, low-pitched harmonics that recalled Art Blakey.

While the 22" Bliss cymbal's ride sound was impressive enough, a good blow set off a thunderous low-pitched crash. I had to work to control the swell from overpowering the stick attack. Two 4" strips of adhesive tape on the underside helped greatly. When I used lighter, "jazz model" sticks, I got away with less tape.

Mountain Rythym sent a few extra 22" Bliss rides to demonstrate the tonal variation inherent in these handcrafted cymbals. Even the heaviest of these (they peak around 5½ pounds) felt very soft under my sticks, and exhibited that signature wobble. One bore telltale scars that attested to a molten birth on a brick oven floor. Whether I played the cymbals with the tip of a stick or crashed them at various dynamic levels, they kept reminding me of a couple of my early-'50s Turkish cymbals. In fact, they were a little lower in pitch. In other words, these are not garden-variety rides. But they're sure fun to play!

I placed the 20" Bliss on my left side, where it proved equally useful for riding and crashing. It, too, wobbled and behaved erratically and revealed several sweet spots. Mallet crashes were extremely effective. I cannot overemphasize the uniqueness of these cymbals—deep in pitch, frothing with thick overtones, and swelling in a manner that begged to be tamed.

The 14" B series hats had me second-guessing myself, trying to figure out which was the top cymbal, since neither was marked. I'd happily play these at a jazz or blues gig. The marriage of the two thinnish metal plates was exceptional, helping them to respond well to hand work. The foot-operated chick sound, however, was a little quiet.

There were no B series splashes included for testing, but there were two Chinese Lion traditional China cymbals with a cylindrical bell and flat outer edges. They performed well in the manner of other commercially available authentic Chinese cymbals.

Bliss On A Budget

Many drummers have never experienced a totally hand-made cymbal. For various reasons—tactile, musical, aesthetic, and historic—I recommend checking out a Dream Bliss ride. When you consider that a 22" Bliss cymbal lists for $225 (and that the street price will likely be significantly lower), you can hardly lose. At the least, you'll be content to gaze at the extensive hand hammering. At most, you'll be at the cutting edge of modern jazz, world music, or singer-songwriter genres.

Mountain Rythym has gotten it right with all three Dream series, in terms of price and sound. With the Contact and (especially) the ragged Bliss series, they've done the cymbal world proud.

THE NUMBERS

Energy (E) Series	
8" splash	$55
10" splash	$65
14" hi-hats	$220
14" crash	$120
16" crash	$150
18" crash/ride	$230
20" ride	$280
Contact (C) Series	
10" splash	$62
12" splash	$79
14" hi-hats	$220
14" crash	$100
16" crash	$120
18" crash/ride	$165
20" crash/ride	$260
22" crash/ride	$290
Bliss (B) Series	
10" splash	$60
12" splash	$75
14" hi-hats	$220
14" crash	$90
16" crash	$115
18" crash	$135
20" ride	$165
22" ride	$225

(905) 764-6543, www.mountainrythym.com

Latin Percussion Giovanni Compact Congas And Bongos

For Practice...And Much More

by Chap Ostrander

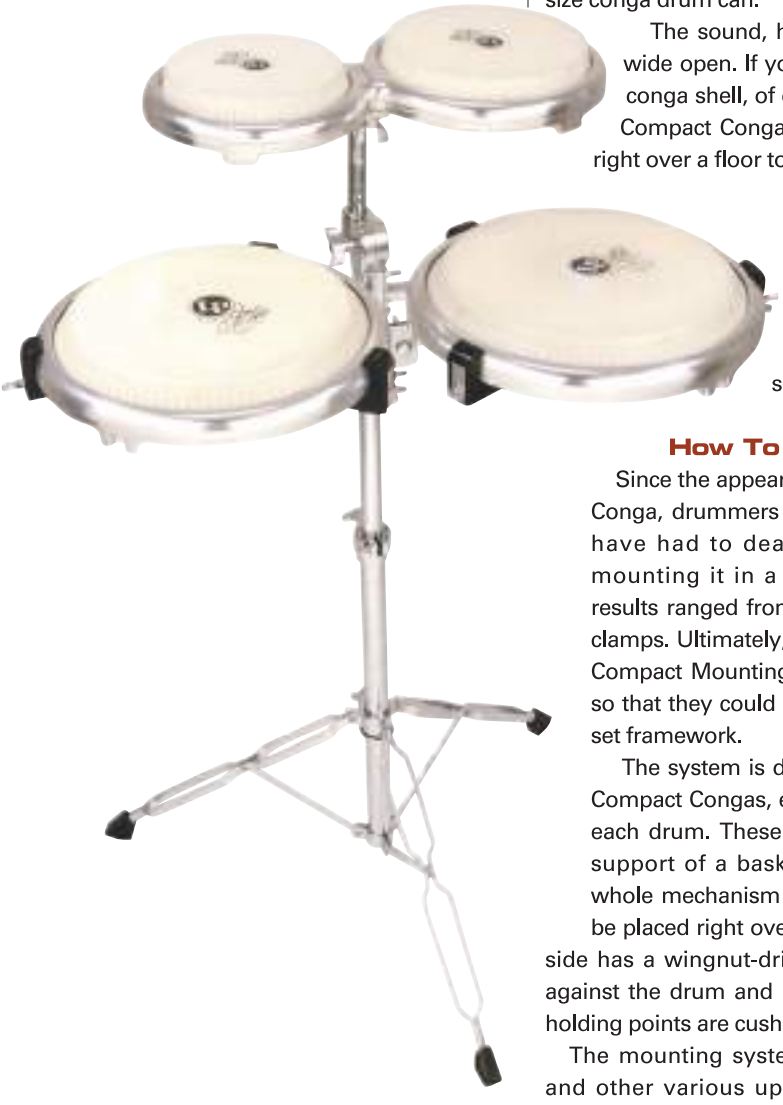
KEY NOTES

- Drums offer surprisingly realistic sounds
- Extremely portable
- New mounting system allows convenient drumkit positioning

Latin Percussion's Giovanni Compact Conga was an instant hit when it was introduced in 2003. Designed in conjunction with super-conguero Giovanni Hidalgo, it represented a portable yet great-sounding practice alternative to a conga with a full shell. The Compact Conga even won the 2003 Musikmesse International Press Award for most innovative instrument. Its success prompted LP to come up with associated instruments that work along the same lines.

The original Compact Conga is a shell-less drum that mounts an 11" synthetic head on an aluminum-alloy frame. You can use a drumkey underneath to change the tension of the head. A single drum will fit in the basket of just about any snare stand. It can be muffled for quiet practice if need be, and it can be carried a great deal more easily than a full-size conga drum can.

The sound, however, is surprisingly reminiscent of a full conga when played wide open. If you compare the overall tone and resonance to that of a full-length conga shell, of course there will be a difference. For my taste, though, I prefer the Compact Conga, because it works so well around a drumset. You can fly one in right over a floor tom or a hi-hat for easy access.



Things Get Bigger

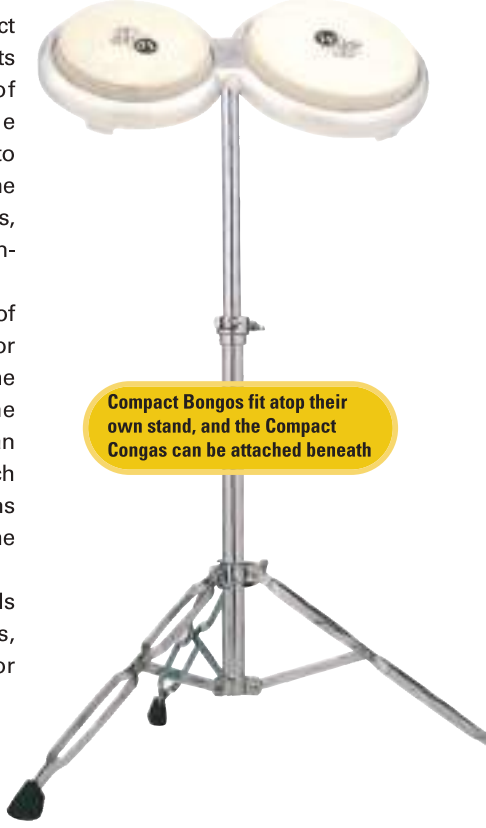
As I said earlier, LP didn't stop with the original 11" Compact Conga. They recently added a larger size (11¾") that has all the same attributes of the 11" drum, but puts out a deeper tone. The difference between them gives you the ability to fully re-create the sounds and patterns of a standard pair of congas.

How To Hold 'Em

Since the appearance of the first Compact Conga, drummers and hand percussionists have had to deal with the problem of mounting it in a playable position. The results ranged from laps to snare stands to clamps. Ultimately, LP decided to create the Compact Mounting System for the congas, so that they could be placed within a drumset framework.

The system is designed to hold a pair of Compact Congas, employing three arms for each drum. These essentially re-create the support of a basket snare stand. But the whole mechanism is flat, so the drums can be placed right over a set. One arm on each side has a wingnut-driven clamp that tightens against the drum and holds it firmly. All of the holding points are cushioned.

The mounting system can attach to stands and other various uprights. The two drums, supported side by side, can be played flat or



Compact Bongos fit atop their own stand, and the Compact Congas can be attached beneath

Compact Congas on their mounting system

Here's how the mount works.

tilted. Some assembly is required, but LP provides pictures, instructions, and all the tools you need. Easy work!

Hittin' The High Road

Of course, what's a set of congas without a set of bongos to provide a high-pitched complement? LP's new Giovanni Compact Bongos are constructed of the same special aluminum alloy as the congas, and can also be tuned with a drumkey from under the heads. The heads are $7\frac{1}{4}$" and $8\frac{5}{8}$" in diameter.

To my ear, the sound and playability of the Compact Bongos matched that of standard models, with the further advantages of their being flat and stand-mounted. They come with a Top Post mount that fits into LP's double-braced LP830 stand. It features a tilter so that you can angle the bongos over the congas. The bongos work off the top of the stand, and the conga mount clamps onto the upright tubing, creating a solid assembly holding all four drums.

Final Word

The whole Giovanni Compact Conga/Bongo package is a winner. You can play the drums with your hands or with sticks, tune them to desired pitches, and mute them for practice if you wish. You can easily take them along to drum circles or other al fresco performances, and you can just as easily mount them as part of your drumkit or existing percussion setup. (I'd certainly add them to *my* kit.)

It's cool to get so much sound and versatility from something that looks so simple.

THE NUMBERS

LP825 11" Giovanni Compact Conga	$219
LP826 $11\frac{3}{4}$" Giovanni Compact Conga	$269
LP828 Giovanni Compact Bongos with top post	$349
LP826M Compact Conga mounting system	$149
LP830 Compact Bongo stand	$99

(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com

Quick Looks

LP One Shot Studio Shaker

The original LP One Shot Shaker—designed with the input of percussionist Daniel de los Reyes—won awards for its originality when it was introduced in 2004. The essence of its design lies in the control it gives you over the sound. With traditional shakers, you get a staccato sound when you shake forward, but you have to deal with the beads returning to strike the interior on the backstroke. Unless you possess the control of players like Daniel, you wind up with extra noise. The One Shot has a silenced rear chamber to do away with that "backstroke noise" altogether.

Until recently, LP offered the original One Shot Shaker and the brighter-sounding One Shot Shaker Live. Either of these might be too loud for studio work, where more subtle sounds can be appreciated. Enter the One Shot Studio model. It's played the same way as the others, but the shaker sound is lighter and more delicate.

One Shot Studio Shakers are just under 1" square and just over 6" long, so they're very easy to handle. They're sold in pairs, which can be played singly or together to produce virtually any shaker rhythm. This was my first chance to work with the One Shots, and I loved them. After working with them for a while, every other shaker I have feels sloppy. List price for a pair is $33.

(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com

Chap Ostrander

Drumagog

Drum Replacer Plug-In

by Michael Dawson

KEY NOTES

- Enhances or replaces drum sounds with relative ease
- Opens the door to a lot of sonic experimentation
- 4 GB library covers a variety of modern drum sounds

As the price and ease-of-use of computer-based recording gear continues to become more consumer-oriented, more and more drummers are diving into the home studio market. But just because you have a powerful computer, the latest Pro Tools setup, and a few decent microphones, it doesn't mean that your basement drum tracks are guaranteed to sound like a million bucks. However, there are tools available that can help you get closer to that ever-elusive "dream" drum sound.

One such tool, a reasonably priced software plug-in called Drumagog, is a virtual trigger device that allows drum tracks to be enhanced or replaced by a variety of sounds from the program's 4 GB library or from your own sample collection. For instance: Don't like the way your 20" kick sounds on a sludgy "Kashmir"-inspired track? Well, with Drumagog, you can replace that sound with a 26" kick drum sample, tune it to match the key of the song, and add a touch of sub-bass from a virtual synthesizer for extra "oomph." And you can do all of that without affecting the dynamics and note placement of your original performance.

The Main View is where you choose your samples, adjust parameters like pitch and blend, and add sounds from a virtual synthesizer.

How's It Work?

The basic premise of Drumagog is fairly simple: The program listens to incoming audio and then plays a sample whenever the volume of the audio reaches a certain level. It works best on multi-track recordings where each piece of the kit is individually miked and given its own track. That way, there's less chance that Drumagog will misfire when instruments other than the target drum are played.

In order to run Drumagog, you have to have a fairly up-to-date computer (running Windows 98 or newer on a PC, and OS9 or later on a Mac) and a software recording program that uses VST, RTAS, or AU plug-in formats. These formats are found in most of today's popular digital audio workstations, like Pro Tools, Digital Performer, Cubase, and Ableton Live.

Since Drumagog is a plug-in, which means that you apply it to individual tracks the same way that you would insert a reverb or other digital effect, you can adjust all of its parameters in real-time without affecting the original file. As a result, you can try out each of the sounds in the sample library as the track plays in order to determine the best match for the song.

Is It Easy To Use?

While the technology involved with this program is complex, you don't need to be an audio wiz to understand how to use it. Basically, all you have to do is open your drum tracks in your recording program, insert Drumagog on the track you'd like to enhance or replace, and choose which sample you want to use. Drumagog takes care of the rest.

On my first attempt, I opened Drumagog on a bass drum track in Ableton Live, and the results were nearly perfect. There were a couple of extra triggers caused by snare drum hits that had bled into the bass drum mic. But it was easy to filter out the additional notes by adjusting the sensitivity and resolution settings.

Continued on page 42

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Electronic Review

The Main Page

The Main page of Drumagog features a drop-down menu of sampled instruments, ten knobs to adjust various parameters, and a movie box that allows you to visually see when the program is being triggered. The input knob adjusts how much of the original signal passes through Drumagog, and the output knob controls the volume that the plug-in sends back to your computer.

The sensitivity and resolution knobs work hand-in-hand to determine when Drumagog will trigger samples. The sensitivity knob determines the quietest decibel level that will fire a sample. Any audio signal below that level passes through unchanged, while sounds that exceed the sensitivity threshold will cause a trigger. I found this parameter particularly effective for adding samples to the accents in snare tracks that also had a lot of grace notes. By setting the sensitivity to a high level (and activating the "Stealth" mode), Drumagog only fired during the loudest strokes, while the grace notes remained unchanged.

The resolution knob determines the minimal amount of time that must pass before Drumagog can be retriggered. By adjusting this parameter, you can eliminate double triggering or you can use it for creative ideas. I raised the resolution on a bass drum track so that Drumagog only triggered on the first stroke of each measure.

The synth section is used to activate various synthesized sounds (sine, sawtooth, triangle, and square waves, white and pink noise, etc.). By using a sine wave at a low frequency, I was able to add a sub-bass sound to my kick drum that would work great for hip-hop recordings. The white noise synth can be used to add extra spread to snare tracks.

The blend knob allows you to adjust the balance between the triggered and original sounds. This feature worked great for enhancing drum sounds without totally replacing them.

The pitch adjustment was very useful for two purposes: to get a drum in tune with the key of a song, and for extreme special effects. By tuning a snare sample way down, the drum sounds as if it's being played in slow-motion, while a super high tuning takes it up to *Chipmunks* territory.

Visual Mode

While the sensitivity and resolution knobs on the main page are relatively easy to use, it's much simpler and more intuitive to adjust these parameters by clicking the "Visual" button. In the Visual mode, the incoming audio is displayed as a scrolling waveform. Each drum stroke appears as a spike on the graph, and each place where Drumagog is triggered is marked as a dot on the spike. By dragging the horizontal line up or down, you're adjusting the sensitivity threshold. The resolution time is adjusted by dragging a vertical line from left to right.

Samples Window

The samples window of Drumagog is used to edit the individual sounds that

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The Makah Burl Cajon with padded seat, rubber feet and built-in snare sound from Meinl.

make up each triggered instrument. Each instrument can contain up to forty-eight samples, which are represented by colored rectangles. The colors represent different dynamic groupings, which are triggered depending on the volume of the incoming audio. These dynamic groupings add an extra element of realism to triggered tracks because each group contains samples with slightly different timbres.

The sample window is also where you can access Drumagog's built-in sampler/audio editor.

Add From Track

If you already have a collection of sample CDs or some original drum tracks that you'd like to add to Drumagog's library, simply import the file into your recording program, insert the plug-in, and

In the Visual Mode, each drum stroke appears as a vertical spike on a scrolling linear scale. The sensitivity is adjusted by dragging a horizontal line just below the quietest strokes you want to trigger.

click on the "Add From Track" button in the Samples window. From there, all you have to do is type in how many samples you want to take and press play. Drumagog will pull the exact number of samples, trim them down to size, and input the new files into the sample window. I used this feature to extract a few kick sounds from a Steve Ferrone sample CD, and it worked perfectly.

Advanced Page

Under the Advanced tab, you can access additional features. The MIDI In/Out section allows you to sync-up Drumagog with an external MIDI controller, drum machine, or sequencer for additional setup possi-

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bilities. If you have electronic drums, Drumagog can be used as a virtual sound module. You can also send MIDI info out of Drumagog to other programs, such as the virtual drum module BFD, to trigger additional sounds.

The Live mode of Drumagog is designed for use as a trigger system during performances. If you're already using a laptop on gigs (for loop playback and/or sequencing purposes), you may find Drumagog to be effective in this setting, because you don't need to worry about purchasing hardware triggers.

Is It Really That Good?

It depends on how you use it. If you're looking for a tool to give you more flexibility and sonic variety when tracking drums in your software-based studio *and* you're mostly dealing in pop, rock, R&B, or other backbeat-oriented styles of music, then Drumagog is a great investment. It's not so great for jazz or other styles that rely on nuance and extreme subtlety. I also wouldn't recommend using Drumagog for cymbals. You're better off overdubbing the real thing. I'd also recommend that you purchase the additional sound libraries from the Drumagog Web site, or spend some time gathering samples of your own. There are some good sounds in the included library, but I found myself wanting more variety.

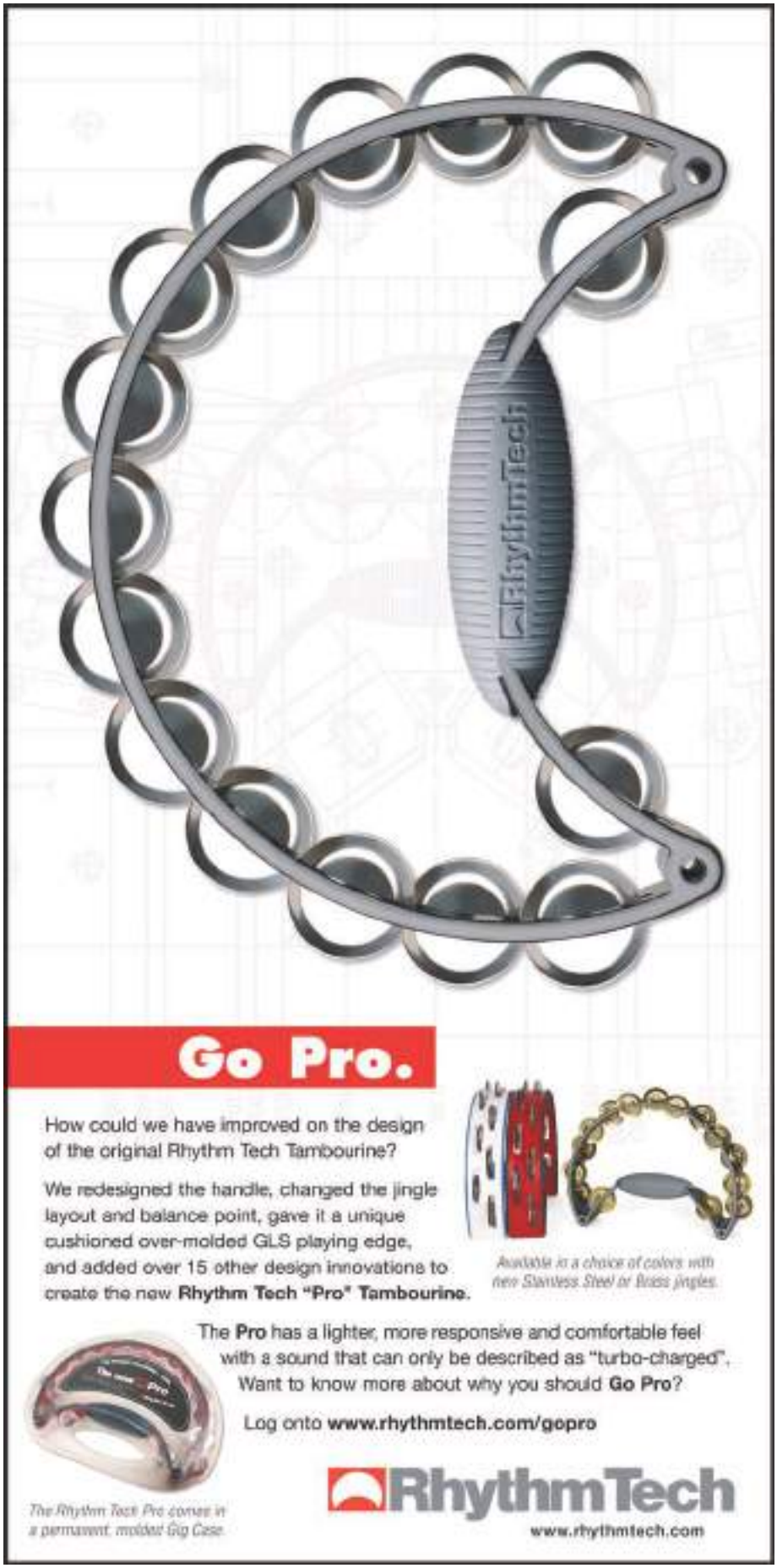
The Verdict

Drumagog is an amazing piece of software that's bound to make a huge impact on drum recording technology. The time that it saved me from having to switch drums, retune heads, and adjust mic placement allowed me to be much more creative, urging me to try things that I never would have thought of without it. And *that's* what it's all about.

THE NUMBERS

Drumagog Basic **$199**
Drumagog Pro **$289**
(877) 318-WAVE, www.drumagog.com

Try out Drumagog for yourself by downloading a demo version at www.drumagog.com.



<< YAMAHA TOUR CUSTOM KIT

The all-maple Tour Custom from Yamaha is designed for players who want a quality kit at a great price, or for educational institutions seeking a solid drumset without stretching their budgets. The kit's 60° bearing edges and air-sealed diagonal-seam shells help enhance clarity. The 7-ply bass drum features enhanced low end, while the 6-ply toms and snare drum add focus to the sound.

The set comes in three shell-pack configurations. Two optional hardware packs and individual components are also available. Lacquer-finishes include Black Onyx, Brown Sunburst, Sakura White, and Ocean Blue. List price is $2,149 with 700 series hardware, $1,599 without hardware.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com

<< MEINL MCS CYMBAL SETUP

The MCS cymbal setup offers pre-packaged, harmonically matched B8 bronze cymbals to provide outstanding sound at an affordable price. A new lathing process applies a deep groove onto the cymbal's surface to reduce thickness and weight for quick response and controllable sound. The MCS cymbal setup contains 14" medium hi-hats, a 16" medium crash, and a 20" medium ride, at a list price of $369.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com

<< CRAVIOTTO CONCERT SNARE

Craviotto's new Concert snare drums feature one-piece maple shells, specially designed snare beds, and an exclusive set of snare wires that incorporate an advanced configuration of cable, gut, and wire strands developed by Cincinnati Symphony principal percussionist Bill Platt. Traditional $5^1/_2$ and $6^1/_2$x14 sizes offer depth, clarity, and sensitivity. Each drum features an exclusive inlay, Diamond tube lugs, triple-flanged counterhoops, and a versatile Trick GS007 throw-off.

(831) 763-0855, www.craviottodrums.com

<< STEVE FERRONE SIGNATURE GRETSCH DRUMS

Renowned studio and touring drummer Steve Ferrone has collaborated with Gretsch to design a new Signature Series drum line. Steve's Signature drums feature Gretsch USA 6-ply maple shells with 30° bearing edges, die-cast hoops, and interior Silver Sealer finish. Because Steve uses different drum sizes according to what is most appropriate for each of his musical projects, his Signature drums are available as custom orders by component. Among the drums offered are several non-standard sizes that Steve finds to be inspirational, including 14x22 ($2,345) and 14x24 ($2,460) bass drums, as well as 14" snares that range from 4" ($1,090) to $8^1/_2$" ($1,110) in depth.

(860) 509-8888, www.gretschdrums.com

Chrome hardware, signature badges, and a 1955 Cadillac Green gloss lacquer finish complete the look of Steve's kit.

<< MEINL PERCUSSION DELUXE CAJON AND DJEMBE BAGS

Meinl's Deluxe cajon and djembe bags feature an internal layer of synthetic fur for extra padding and protection. The bags are made from heavy-duty padded black nylon and come with an external pocket, a carrying grip, and a padded shoulder strap (cajon bag) or backpack strap (djembe bag). The cajon bag lists for $109, a medium djembe bag is priced at $126, while a large bag sells for $129.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com

The fur lining removes moisture from the instrument' s surface to keep the wood safe from harm.

<< SKB MID-SIZED DRUM HARDWARE CASE

SKB's DH3315W mid-size hardware case was developed to accommodate the traveling drummer who's short on space. The roto-molded polyethylene case has interior dimensions of $33^1/_2$" long by $14^1/_2$" wide by $14^1/_4$" high and will easily fit in the back seat of a car. It features a telescoping lift-off cover design, built-in handles, nylon web cinch closures, an injection-molded pull-out handle, and built-in rollerblade wheels.

(714) 685-5232, www.skbcases.com

Playing With Sticks (DVD)

by Jeff Queen (Hudson Music)

This nearly four-hour DVD by international solo snare drum champion (and former featured drummer in *Blast*) Jeff Queen features a comprehensive approach to developing hand technique. Queen presents essential hand techniques along with a detailed analysis of the Moeller and Velocity strokes, and then demonstrates how to apply these techniques to flams, diddles, rolls, timing, and hybrid rudiments. List price is $29.95.

(888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com, www.musicdispatch.com

Brushworks (DVD)

by Clayton Cameron (Carl Fischer)

In this comprehensive DVD, brush master Clayton Cameron gives the viewer an encyclopedic survey of brush strokes demonstrated in a step-by-step process. Other highlights include Cameron playing his signature strokes while accompanied by tap dancing legend Chester Williams, illustrating the relationship between the two art forms. Also included are solo presentations by Cameron and bonus performances by The Clayton Cameron Trio. List price is $34.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com

Modern Drummer Festivals 2000 & 2003 (DVD Combo Pack)

Various Artists (Hudson Music)

This three-disc package includes all the footage from the individual 2000 and 2003 Festival DVDs, and is the perfect complement to Hudson/Modern Drummer's award-winning triple DVD of the 2005 Modern Drummer Festival. Featured 2003 artists include Hip Pickles, Nathaniel Townsley, Matt Wilson, Steve Smith, Mike Portnoy, Antonio Sanchez, Airto Moreira, Shawn Pelton, Nick D'Virgilio, and The Drumbassadors. MD Festival 2000 artists include Don Brewer, Vinnie Colaiuta, Akira Jimbo, Hilary Jones, Billy Ward, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez with Marc Quiñones, Paul Leim, and Dave Lombardo. List price is $49.95.

(888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com, www.musicdispatch.com

Turn It Up & Lay It Down Volume 6: Messin Wid Da Bull (CD)

(Rhythm Tech & DrumFun)

The latest volume in the *Turn It Up & Lay It Down* series of minus-drums, play-along CD pays homage to the great horn bands of the '70s, including Tower Of Power, Blood Sweat & Tears, Chicago, Earth, Wind & Fire, and The Average White Band. The "old school" grooves offer a wide range of tempos and feels that make the CD a great practice tool as well as a challenge for drummers of all ages. The CD includes thirteen play-along tracks featuring a horn section made up of top studio musicians. List price is $19.95.

(800) 726-2279, mailto:orders@rhythmtech.com, www.drumfun.com

Play Drums Now!—A Complete Lesson In A Box (Beginner to Intermediate) And The Complete Drummer—A Complete Lesson In A Box Vol. 2 (Intermediate to Advanced) (DVDs)

by Tony Cannelli (Fifth Avenue Films)

These two DVDs by noted UK drummer/educator Cannelli offer complete tutorials on drumset playing, for beginning to advanced players. They are now available in shops in the US through Music Sales Corporation, www.musicroom.com, or direct from www.fifthavenuefilms.com.

List price unavailable at press time.

The Drum Pad's 20th Anniversary (DVD)

Various Artists (Altitude Digital Productions)

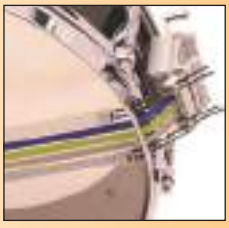
This two-DVD box set captures the 20th Anniversary celebration of Palatine, Illinois drum retailer The Drum Pad. The event, which went down September 2005 at the Vic Theater in Chicago, featured performances by Terry Bozzio, Chad Wackerman, Jeff Hamilton, The Jimmy Chamberlin Complex, George Brooks' Summit (featuring Zakir Hussain and Steve Smith), Mike Mangini, and Mike Portnoy. Photos, interviews, and multiple bonus tracks are included. List price unavailable at press time.

www.altitudedigital.com

<< AND WHAT'S MORE >>

ROC-N-SOC's GRIPP-ET is a unique drumstick grip. At 1" to $1\frac{1}{4}$" in length and $\frac{1}{16}$" thick, GRIPP-ET can be placed precisely where you need it for a variety of functions. Simply roll it end over end, up or down your stick to the preferred location. It's also great for sound dampening on cymbals and cowbells, and can be folded double on the stick tip for practice on any surface. Three available sizes guarantee a tight fit on any stick. Packages of six in all one size or two each of the three sizes list for $4.95.
(828) 452-1736, www.rocnsoc.com

BLACK SWAMP PERCUSSION offers a new five-strand wire-wound snare unit on all Multisonic snare drums, and as a retrofit for the four-strand curly-wire unit for all SoundArt snare drums at no additional charge. This exclusive wire-wound unit produces enhanced sensitivity and articulation. It's available separately at a list price of $36.



(616) 879-0066,
www.blackswamp.com

The new Legion Celebrity kit from **PEACE** is scaled and priced for the beginner. It features a 14x20 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, 12x15 floor tom, and 5x13 wood snare drum, with a basic package of stands and pedals. It's currently available only in a black wrap.
(626) 581-4510, www.peacemusic.com.tw

RITTER's new Junior line of bags offers individual models to fit all standard drum sizes, along with drumset options and bags for sticks, cymbals, and assorted percussion. In addition to a sleek, minimalist look, the line features padded handles, silver metallic embroidered zip pulls, and subtle silver metallic branding. The bags are offered in black with a metal mesh application.
(866) 747-3043, www.ritter-bags.com

Want to tame an unwanted ring from a drum or cymbal? Try **VATER**'s Buzz Kill dampening system. Each Buzz Kill disc can be cut to any size to achieve the desired amount of dampening. Buzz Kill is super-tacky, so it can be used on batter and resonant drumheads, as well as on cymbals. It's also reusable and can be easily cleaned with water when dirty. A package of six Buzz Kill discs lists for $9.95.

If the ringing you want to control is in your ears, Safe N' Sound Ear Plugs might be the answer. Each pair includes two filter styles for different levels of decibel reduction. The plugs can be washed to maintain cleanliness, and they come with a pouch for safe storage at $29.95 per pair.
(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com

SILVAPLAY aluminum drumsticks are made in South Africa by drummer/designer Pieter Appelcryn. They're said to play as comfortably as wood sticks, while being far more durable. SilvaPlay claims that the aluminum tips sound much like nylon tips on cymbals, and that they don't damage cymbals, since aluminum is softer than bronze. Two models are available, one for lighter playing and one for heavier playing. Sticks may be ordered from the manufacturer at approximately $34 USD per pair.

pikkewynsue@telkomsa.net

BOPWORKS sticks are designed to replicate the feel and response of the lightweight sticks used in the jazz clubs of the 1950s and '60s, for clear cymbal sound at low volume. Tips, length, and shoulder tapers of various "signature" models offered by the major drum companies of those eras were researched to create sticks with an "old school" feel. The sticks are pitch paired and matched for weight.

www.bopworks.net

SIMPSON PERCUSSION Dual Grip Flip Mallets feature a chamois ball at one end and a luminescent Lexan ball at the other, for multipurpose use on timpani, drums, cymbals, and bell mallet instruments. Their hand-finished wood grips are specially contoured for balance and response when played in either direction. List price is $60.

(914) 720-6405,
community.webtv.net/scottdrum/simpsonpercussion

ZipWraps Automatic Earphone Retractors from **DIGITAL INNOVATIONS** are designed to tame cables for virtually any earphones, earbuds, or headset. The cookie-sized organizer extends and retracts cables with a spring-loaded mechanism. It stores the entire wire when the ear gear is not in use, and keeps excess cable safely spooled inside when the user is listening to an MP3 player, iPod, or belt-worn in-ear monitor system. The unit comes in black and in white, at a list price of $9.99.

www.digitalinnovations.com

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shown: Collector's Series Maple VLT in Natural Lacquer over Macassar Ebony Vertical Grain Exotic and 24k Gold Hardware

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Stephen Perkins

A Drummer's Life Less Ordinary

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca

With several projects going at the moment—including *two* bands, a performance DVD, and several clinic appearances—it's clear that no one is more committed to drumming than Stephen Perkins.

An enchanted sprite flailing the drums like a demented genie? A court jester playing with sticks and stones? Or a rock 'n' roll daredevil climbing the peaks of self-expression and self-realization, drums tied to his compact frame like a Sherpa carrying water for the master?

As the drummer with mega-selling rock bands and street hungry organic/improv units alike, Stephen Perkins has occupied these personas and more, his never-ending quest to refine his musical gifts serving as an inspirational spark plug to the many musicians who surround him.

Coming to prominence with Jane's Addiction in the late '80s, Perkins supplied Goliath slam and loose-limbed grooves to their razor-sharp alt-rock epics, his anything goes approach the perfect mirror for a band of LA hedonists. "Been Caught Stealing," "Mountain Song," "Ain't No Right," and "Had A Dad" were galvanic Jane's rockers that marked Perkins' arrival as a potent drummer to be reckoned with. Later, with Jane's offshoot Porno For Pyros, Perkins morphed rock with world rhythms and hand percussion, his inventively organized setup reflecting the many passions that boiled close to the surface but still under his skin.

Perkins' own project, Banyan, found the now thirty-nine-year-old firebrand playing the drum freak. The group, which includes bassist Mike Watt and guitarist Nels Cline, has recorded three albums that showcase the drummer's organic approach to rock, world, jazz, punk, and experimental music. Banyan's latest, *Live At Perkins' Palace*, covers Stephen's many fascinations, from steaming late-period Miles Davis–styled jams ("Mad As A Hornet") and free-floating Arabian improvs ("Om Om Om") to spectral space rock ("Only You Will Know") and percussion extravaganzas ("El Sexxo"). Throughout, Perkins' drumming is perpetually raw, fiery, and beautiful.

And even with all of his superstar gigs, Perkins has found time to keep a foot in the studio scene, contributing rhythm magic to recordings of every stripe. In 1999 he joined Tommy Lee in Methods Of Mayhem, playing an electronic drumset to a click for a yearlong tour. His session and live credits also include work with Rage Against The Machine, No Doubt, Nine Inch Nails, Infectious Grooves, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Milla Jovovich, Jerry Cantrell, Rancid, Jewel, Sheryl Crow, Rob Wasserman, Peter Murphy, Love And Rockets, Hell Ride, and No Material. Perkins also travels these great United States showcasing his drum skills in clinics for the drum faithful and in therapeutic drum circles for those less fortunate, bringing his Go-Jo Bags to retreats all over Southern California.

Perkins' latest mountain-climbing event is Panic Channel, a corporate rock quartet that revisits the Jane's Addiction mold. Featuring his old chums Dave Navarro and Chris Chaney, along with vocalist Steve Isaacs, the band has a sound that's at once titanic and hook-driven—quintessential LA radio rock for cruising and schmoozing. You can almost hear Clear Channel panting to put Panic Channel's first single, "Why Cry," in heavy rotation.

While Panic Channel makes the rounds of late-night television and stadium tours and Banyan hits small clubs from Peoria to Poughkeepsie, perhaps the easiest place to capture Stephen Perkins is on his Drum Workshop DVD, *Stephen Perkins: A Drummer's Life*. Shot in the studio at his Tarzana, California home (Perkins' Palace), the DVD covers every angle of the drummer's musical existence. Perkins' zest for life practically jumps out of the screen, whether he's jamming on Jane's Addiction and Porno For Pyros favorites with guitarist Wes Borland (Limp Bizkit) and bassist Tony Franklin (The Firm), playing hand percussion in the California desert, trashing his kit with Hell Ride or Banyan, or simply banging percussion in his extremely well-outfitted backyard studio.

Speaking with *MD* after returning from a Banyan performance at the Ten Thousand Lakes Festival in Minneapolis, Perkins discussed the magical, mystical, healing power of rhythm, and why sometimes the best thing to do is just hit the drums.

Drums: DW Vertical Low Timbre (in Formula 1 Yellow to Ferrari Red Burst over curly maple-shell finish)
- **A.** 7x14 wood snare
- **B.** 6½x14 aluminum snare (prototype)
- **C.** 11x13 tom
- **D.** 9x10 tom
- **E.** 13x15 floor tom
- **F.** 16x18 floor tom
- **G.** 16x22 bass drum
- **H.** 16x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 17" A medium crash
2. 13" hi-hats (Quick Beat top, Mastersound bottom)
3. 19" K Custom Hybrid crash with 6" Zil-Bel inverted on top
4. 22" K Custom ride
5. 18" K Custom Hybrid crash
6. 16" A medium crash
7. 20" A China Boy Low with LP Ice Bell inverted on top

Hardware: DW, including two 9000 series single pedals and a hi-hat stand

Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare batters, clear Emperors on toms, clear PowerStroke 3s on bass drums

Percussion: LP Jam Block, tambourine ring for hi-hat, bongos, shakers, maracas, castanet sticks, chimes, various Pete Engelhart Percussion instruments

Sticks: Pro-Mark Stephen Perkins signature model (oak)

Electronics: Roland V-Drums

MD: Your Drum Workshop DVD, *Stephen Perkins: A Drummer's Life*, really relates the *fun* of being a drummer. Whether performing with a trio, playing hand drums in the desert, goofing with your dogs, or gently rolling over a cymbal tree in your home studio, the DVD is more about inspiration than playing the perfect paradiddle.

Stephen: Exactly. There are a lot of drummers who can tell you how to play a paradiddle. But I have something else to offer. Take the technique seriously, but that's only twelve hours of the day. For the other twelve hours, go live your life so you have something to say when you're behind the drumset. That's the focus of the video.

MD: You retain that spirit of just loving to play the drums, but not necessarily loving drum technique.

Stephen: My favorite drummers are the guys with real personality in their playing. Some of the best chops guys aren't my favorites. I would rather listen to someone like Keith Moon, who you know just by his drum fills that his personality is left of center. Or with Neil Peart, you imagine he must be very intelligent, well read, and really organized—you can hear all of that in his drumming. I'm kind of a bubbly, hyper guy and I think that comes out in my playing.

Go With The (Lava) Flow

MD: In Banyan, and all your bands, your trademark is a rolling forward motion. It feels like you're tumbling over an African plane. What's the source of that?

Stephen: Thanks for putting your finger on it. I guess it's an African influence; it's circular, and more about communication and awakening people for a bounce rather than trying to figure out where the kick and snare should fit against a bass line. When you pull all of the other instruments away and it's just the drums alone, there's a momentum of up and down, peaks and valleys. One guy can play the same beat as another, but how does it feel?

When you see Abe Laboriel Jr. play, his feel is so good, I somehow relax my body and feel this large circle; it could be the shape of an egg or the shape of a big bouncing ball. I visualize that roll and try to think of a pattern that will keep the body moving like a dancer. I'm trying to awaken that molten lava inside of me. It's slow and liquid, but it's constantly moving. When

I'm playing, I try to tap into that. I try to relax and forget about the rules, like how I'm holding the sticks. What's the reason we're playing this song? Is it scary, sexy, or what? Take all these ideas, but never lose that lava, that movement.

The cardinal sin for me is to play a drum fill that causes people to stop moving. For me, music is below the waist. It really shouldn't be above the neck. You've got drummers coming out of New York City who are above the neck and they can blow your mind. But that's not me.

MD: If you put it like that, isn't Vinnie Colaiuta above the neck? You don't get any more esoteric and abstract than him. And he's all LA.

Stephen: That's true, but Vinnie is the type of guy who feels so good.

MD: In the DVD you hold the stick very far back.

Stephen: Yeah, my hands slide back real quick as soon as I start playing. It's not the correct way to hold the stick, but that's where I'm at. That's the power-rock way to hold sticks, especially when I'm rocking hard. As the dynamics change, so does the placement of my hands on the sticks. When we play big fat tempos, I go to the butts.

MD: Do you always play barefoot?

Stephen: Always. When I was a kid I would remove my shoes to play drums. I got used to using my toes, curling them, and going up and down on the pedal—heel up, heel down. When I have shoes on I lose all that action. I feel all the work my feet are doing is being wasted on the sole of the shoe. I'm like a skateboarder who goes barefoot.

One Lucky Shooting Star

MD: How has your drumming changed since the latter days of Porno For Pyros and the first Banyan record up to today?

Stephen: Well, with age hopefully comes wisdom. If you listen to Bonham on "Dazed And Confused" and then "Kashmir," he is just as effective, but how simple is he on "Kashmir"? And how busy is he on "Dazed And Confused"? That's the kind of transition I hear in my own drumming.

I feel that there's some really powerful, primal drumming coming from me now. But somehow the placement and knowledge of when to use it is clearer to me. I know when to pull the trigger. And I'm also better at interpreting the music in the band. Back in the day I was into a very free-spirited kind of playing, where I'd sometimes ignore the musicians, go my own way, and pull the band in my direction. I still do that, but I have a better understanding now of where that works best.

At the same time, the environment—the people I've played with and all the different sessions and tours I've done—and the influences of other drummers, have all made an impact. When I was a kid I listened mostly to jazz. Then I became a rock 'n' roll freak. Now I have a library of Brazilian, African, and Cuban records and Japanese drumming and Israeli sounds. Drummers should check out other cultures.

MD: Have you practiced anything specific over the years?

Stephen: I'm not a traditionalist who tries to find the exact way to play this beat or that beat. My thing is more interpretation and putting an original approach on it. I

also stay involved and alert.

I remember seeing Max Roach playing with some DJs back in '86. He knew that was the next step. It's important to keep your finger on the pulse of the current rhythms.

MD: As a kid, did you study the twenty-six rudiments, or were you self-taught?

Stephen: I started playing when I was eight. And then at thirteen, I studied with a great drummer in Los Angeles named Jim Engle who had books published through the Hollywood Drum Shop. He taught me traditional grip, the rudiments, and a work ethic. As an adult you really need a work ethic to keep up a practice schedule.

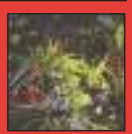
Around that time my cousin, Joel Gallant, who was also a drummer, was into Elvin Jones, Max Roach, and Art Blakey, and he made me aware of those drummers. He would hip me to all this stuff he was working on as a twenty-year-old and leave me in shock. That changed my whole sound. I started practicing the rudiments, and then when I was in high school I played snare drum in marching band. It was fun to play in the drum section, and that engendered another kind of work ethic in me. There was that competition, and it was healthy. And that's when I met Dave Navarro…he was playing bass drum! We started our first heavy metal band, called Dizastre, when we were both sixteen.

When I was Bar Mitzvahed, I took the money and bought a five-piece Ludwig set. From then on I would eat my dinner behind the drums. I wanted to be close to them; I didn't want to lose that connection. And I would play along with my stereo to my heart's desire.

MD: What's your ideal practice regimen now?

Perkins' Picks

Stephen's Best Recordings



Artist	Album
The Panic Channel	ONe
Banyan	Banyan
Banyan	Anytime At All
Banyan	Live At Perkins' Palace
Jane's Addiction	Nothing's Shocking
Jane's Addiction	Live At The Roxy
Jane's Addiction	Kettle Whistle
Jane's Addiction	Ritual De Lo Habitual
Jane's Addiction	Up From The Catacombs: The Best Of Jane's Addiction
Porno For Pyros	Porno For Pyros
Porno For Pyros	Good God's Urge
Infectious Grooves	The Plague That Makes Your Booty Move… It's The Infectious Grooves
Stephen Perkins	Stephen Perkins: A Drummer's Life (DW DVD)

His Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Led Zeppelin	Physical Graffiti	John Bonham
Led Zeppelin	How The West Was Won	John Bonham
The Who	Who's Next	Keith Moon
Jimi Hendrix	Are You Experienced	Mitch Mitchell
Bad Brains	Attitude: The ROIR Sessions	Earl Hudson
Siouxsie And The Banshees	Nocturne	Budgie
The Beatles	Revolver	Ringo Starr

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Stephen: If I'm not doing a gig that day, it's great to get behind my big drumset in my home studio. Sometimes I'll take it from the top by warming up my hands with rudiments. Sometimes I just want to be creative and make some colors and awaken something in me. And sometimes I'll get aggressive and just do double bass for twenty-five minutes.

It's always fun to put on records and get a vibe from there. I'll put my iPod on random or play a Rush tune or a Michael Jackson track. When you're alone, you have to keep yourself interested. And sometimes it's interesting to just play the rudiments, to make sure you're doing them right. Other times, I'll play along to some Aerosmith and get real basic.

MD: So inspiration is something you have to work at.

Stephen: It's not that; I just like to make sure I'm having a good time with it so I'm not frustrated. I don't want to be thinking, "What else could I be doing with my time?" It's important to look at the instrument as my tool to exercise my emotions.

I'm trying to remind the world that there is that little spark in everybody. I still have it because I'm just some lucky

shooting star who got it when I was eight. I want to play drums and make people laugh and tap their feet. How do I consistently do that and still enjoy my life? I'm so blessed that I don't have to work a day job and do drums as a hobby. I make sure every performance has my personality behind it and has more than 150% pure emotion.

Perkins' Percussion Discussion

MD: Was *Live At Perkins' Palace* recorded live or with overdubs?

Getting Vertical

Perkins On His Drumkit

MD: What's the technology behind your Drum Workshop Vertical Low Timbre drums?

Stephen: It has to do with the way the wood plies are placed together. The VLT plies go in different directions. It brings out more low end and attack. Also, the drums don't have any reinforcement hoops, like most DW drums do. The VLT kit offers more depth and thunder behind each stroke. These drums really sing and vibrate together.

Overall, the fun challenge of using the new VLT kit is interpreting what I played on my old kit over the past few years—how I adapt my playing according to the response of these new drums.

Setup-wise, I've been getting into using two different-sized bass drums for different tones. I'm not really doing your normal "train rolling" double bass drum stuff. It's more sporadic, like popcorn. So I thought two different notes would be interesting.

MD: You're playing a DW prototype aluminum snare. What does that give you?

Stephen: With different heads and different tunings, I can go after my favorite rock sounds, more like a Bonham snare sound from the *Physical Graffiti* days, like on "Kashmir." I wanted a snare drum that fell in that frequency range and that would give me a combination of warmth and snap. I wasn't sure how bright aluminum would sound, but I played around with it and found it to be a dry sound, but with a lot of guts. With Panic Channel's slower, mid-tempo music, there's a lot of room for fat snare sounds. I wanted that fatness along with the volume.

I also have a 7x14 wood snare on my left. Most people have their extra snare tuned high like a piccolo, but I go for a lower sound and with a little muffling. I use it for some of the quieter moments in the show where I need to lay back a little more.

MD: Your toms don't descend in size as you go from left to right, as in the typical drummer setup. What does that give you?

Stephen: My essential drumset vision when I sit down is I want my snare, either a 12", 13", or even a 10" tom right above the snare, and a 14", 15", or 16" just to my right for the first floor tom. So right there I have my basic four-piece kit. Then I decide what additional sounds I want to add, but without interrupting the flow of the orginal drumset. So I might add a timbale, a bongo, another snare, or something that won't blow the flow.

MD: But as far as your toms, they don't fall in a descending tonal line.

Stephen: Right. That setup stimulates me musically and melodically. With Porno For Pyros, I put the timbale where the second floor tom would normally be or a pair of bongos where the 10" tom would be. All of a sudden I was coming up with different tribal and polyrhythmic beats, less kick/snare/hat. It was more about the sounds coming from the drums than the cymbals.

And my choice of cymbals can change in the studios too, depending on the warmth or cut I need. Cymbals, vocals, and guitars share a lot of the same frequencies, so I try to pick cymbals that still have a place in the sound without stepping on the guitars and vocals. It's always a choice. Each room and studio is different.

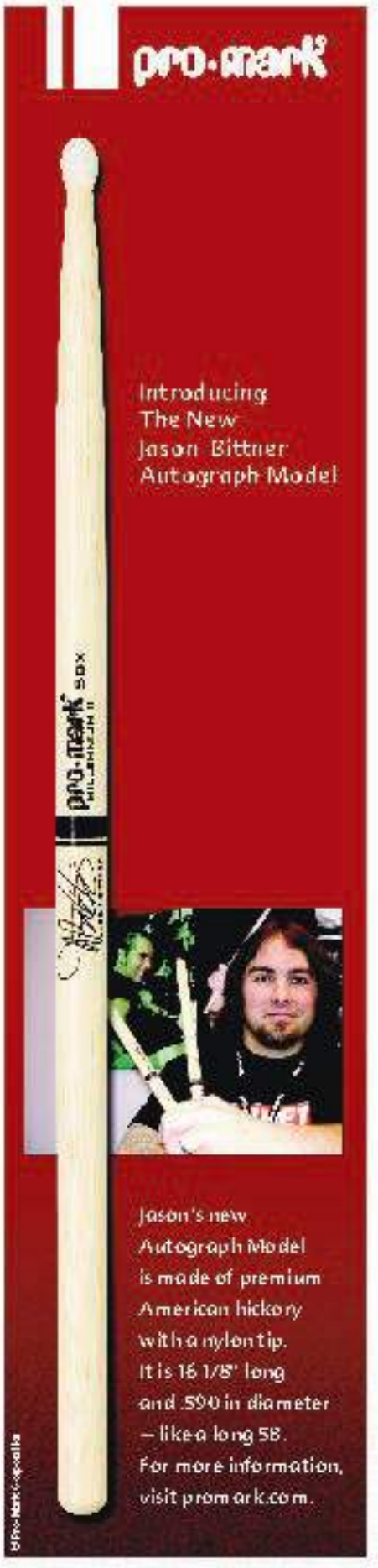
MD: Is your Banyan set typically smaller?

Stephen: Yes, smaller drums—10", 12", and 14" toms. I also like to use a 13" snare and smaller depths, plus smaller, quicker cymbals. I like to hit it and quit it with Banyan. It's the opposite with Panic Channel, where there's lots of space for everything to sing together.

When I change to a smaller kit, my playing changes. It's important for drummers to realize how easy it is to interpret different kinds of music with your gear and your approach.

MD: Do you use electronics with Panic Channel?

Stephen: I have some Roland V-Drums. I drop a few sub sounds, some 808 bass drums, to beef things up. I'll also incorporate a couple of different cymbal sounds for the quieter moments, interpreting real cymbals using the unusual V-Drum cymbals. That adds a nice texture through the PA. •



Stephen: Absolutely live. We only overdubbed percussion. We recorded each song in maybe two or three takes. That's what Banyan is about: capturing the band live in the studio. My studio is equipped for that; I have a great drumset and some good mics, so it's a simple recording process. I just capture what we're doing.

MD: What snare drum did you use? It's very fat and wet sounding.

Stephen: That was a DW wood 5x13. With Banyan, I want quick response and less thunder. I tune the snare real fat and put some muffling on it. That's the snare sound for most of the record.

Each song is mixed differently, with a different effect on the other instruments based on what will work for each tune. But the drumset is the same throughout. The snare sound is a combination of tuning, mic placement, and capturing the room sound. I wanted a drum sound with a sense of reality to it.

MD: On "Om Om Om," it sounds like you're playing hand percussion, a thunder stick, RotoToms, bells….

Stephen: The thunder sheet sound was produced by shaking a thin piece of metal, like a ribbon. I have a house full of percussion. When I overdub with any of my bands, I bring a whole bunch of stuff. We try a lot of different ideas, and when it comes to the mix we see what's appropriate. I play with a lot of toys on that track and also on the tune "El Sexxo." It's a chance for me to be colorful—get my personality off the drumkit and use my fingers. It's also good to be able to use rhythms in a smaller circle, as opposed to the drumkit, where I use the rhythms as a larger circle.

MD: Are you playing brushes on "King Of Long Beach"?

Stephen: Those are Pro-Mark Rods, the thin ones called Lightning Rods. That lets me use my rock sensibility in a jazz environment as opposed to trying to be a jazz drummer. That isn't me. I switch to sticks halfway through.

I've gotten good at switching from sticks to rods to mallets without losing the beat. It's important for drummers to practice dropping sticks and picking them up without losing the momentum.

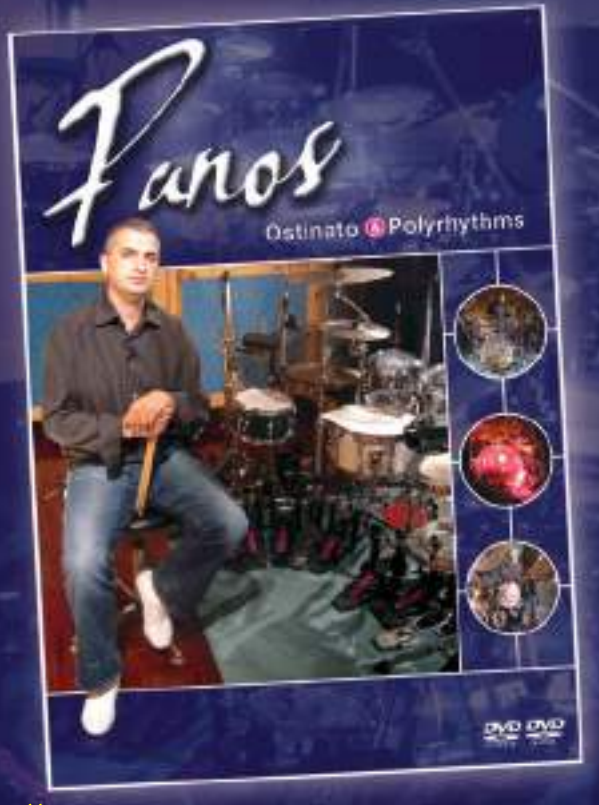
MD: You play many different sources on "Rocks A Fallin'."

Stephen: I like to do a little drum piece, a percussion discussion, on every Banyan record. For that song, I added some conga, gong, kick, snare, and hat, and then went to the African slit drum, which I use in the DVD. Then I brought in some timpani and talking drum. There is such a cool, psychedelic swirling low end to both of those drums.

MD: You get the weirdest sound out of timpani.

Stephen: I play a lot with the pedals; it doesn't have a locking mechanism, so I can go up and down tonally, almost like a wah-wah effect. And I play timpani with sticks, which pulls a strange metallic sound out of the drums. I'll even use a timbale approach, playing rimshots to get different sounds. And during mixdown we tweaked it a little bit with electronics to make it psychedelic for a moment. It's definitely *not* orchestral.

When I play the bells, my slit drum, or my steel drums, and then go back to the drumkit, I see the kit in a different light.



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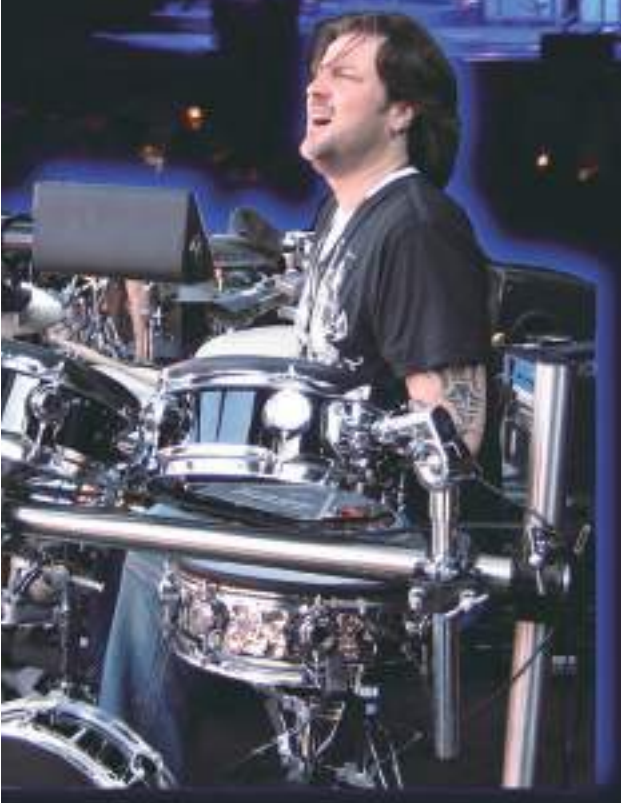

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That can be stimulating, even if you're not into hand percussion. That's what happened to me with my first set of bongos; it triggered all these sounds I used in Porno For Pyros.

Circling The Drums

MD: In between working with your various bands, you've found time to conduct drum circles with the disabled.

Stephen: I started doing drum circles with the disabled in 1996. My drum tech, Joey Klaparda, and I invented Go-Jo Bags, which are manufactured by LP. They utilize specially selected beads that are sealed inside a nylon bag, and the duration and volume of the sound is controlled by how tightly the bag is held. The reason I mention them is, my friend Scott Weinberg, who has muscular dystrophy, invited me to play at Camp Joan Mier in Malibu, a retreat for the physically challenged. Scott would use the Go-Jo Bag, which has a *Velcro* strap, and strap it on his hand so he wouldn't have to worry about it falling off since he had lost some strength in his limbs.

So I went to this retreat up in Malibu and put together a drum circle with about a hundred twenty people, and it was an awesome experience. Some of the kids were slightly mentally challenged, some were bedridden. I brought a kick, snare, and hi-hat to be the heartbeat, and then we got the kids to play congas, tambourines, djembes, claves, cowbells, bongos, and Go-Jo Bags. It really struck a chord in me, that simple rhythms can affect people in the most positive way. We pass out the Go-Jo Bags and it gets noisy, but I love it!

I've been putting on drum circles ever since at schools, charity events, drum clinics—anywhere. Parents have told me that they haven't seen their kids that happy in a long time. I tell everyone to enjoy themselves and don't be afraid of making noise and don't be afraid even if you break your instrument—you can't do anything wrong. That's the moment when I see everyone loosening up. And then I just lead the way with the rhythms.

MD: How have the drum circles influenced you?

Stephen: It awakens the true calling of the drummer—how primitive and simple these things can be. Drums have been used to communicate, to make war, and to heal. That's everything wrapped into one. These kids are at war with what life has dealt them, and I'm there to help them to live in the moment and enjoy the power of just how satisfying hitting something can be.

Panic Or Pleasure?

MD: Panic Channel must have been a different recording situation than Banyan.

Stephen: I've been playing with Dave Navarro since high school, so that's all flow. And I've been playing with Chris Chaney since we both worked in Jane's Addiction. Our singer is the new element. We have this new sound of beauty and the beast, a singer who can soothe with a band or go into Zeppelin, Rush, and Sabbath.

MD: How did you record your drum tracks?

Stephen: The drums always went down first. And the first or second take was the winner. We used four different studios in LA, my favorite being Conway studios. I like a wood floor, wood ceiling, and wood walls. I can work with plaster and curtains, but in Panic Channel, where there's room for the thunder to be heard, I wanted something airy.

We picked rooms that weren't too big, and we usually sat the drums in a corner where the low end could sing a bit. I also like to work with the engineer on different muffling and miking techniques. I'd show up early and work on the drum sounds, so when the band showed up we could move forward.

MD: Was the music recorded to a click?

Stephen: Yes. Live, you can speed up, but in the studio you have to hold back. I became really friendly with the click working with Tommy Lee. In that situation I prefer that I'm the only one in the band to have the click. The band plays to me.

MD: So are we hearing natural drum sounds or an 808 kick, for instance, to beef up certain songs?

Stephen: When you mix, you add elements that are necessary for dynamics or just for the textures that are available. I'm an organic player, so we put the sounds underneath. We layer them subliminally, so it's not like, "Perkins is playing a bunch of electronic sounds."

When we add those types of sounds, I listen to it and think, How does this affect me as a piece of music? Do the drums have life? Sometimes the sounds can kill the ghost notes and the textures, so I make sure all of that is still there. It should always be about serving the song, from the drum part to how loud the drums are in the song.

MD: Rhythmically, Panic Channel is the straightest and simplest drumming of your career. Did it require a more controlled approach?

Stephen: Yes. The tempos are more mid-tempo and the drumming is simpler. That's my approach to the record. It's about expressing my personality yet playing appropriately for the song. Banyan is the opposite. It's about coming up with all sorts of crazy ideas in one song.

In Panic Channel, I want to make the other guys sound good. I left a lot of room for big cymbals and spacious drum fills. But I didn't want to bland it down or over-think it.

With this new band, after Jane's and everything else I've done, it's nice to have a big rock sound with a glorious vocalist. It feels like I've graduated to a new level, a new chapter in my career. It's a pleasure.

To hear some of Stephen Perkins' tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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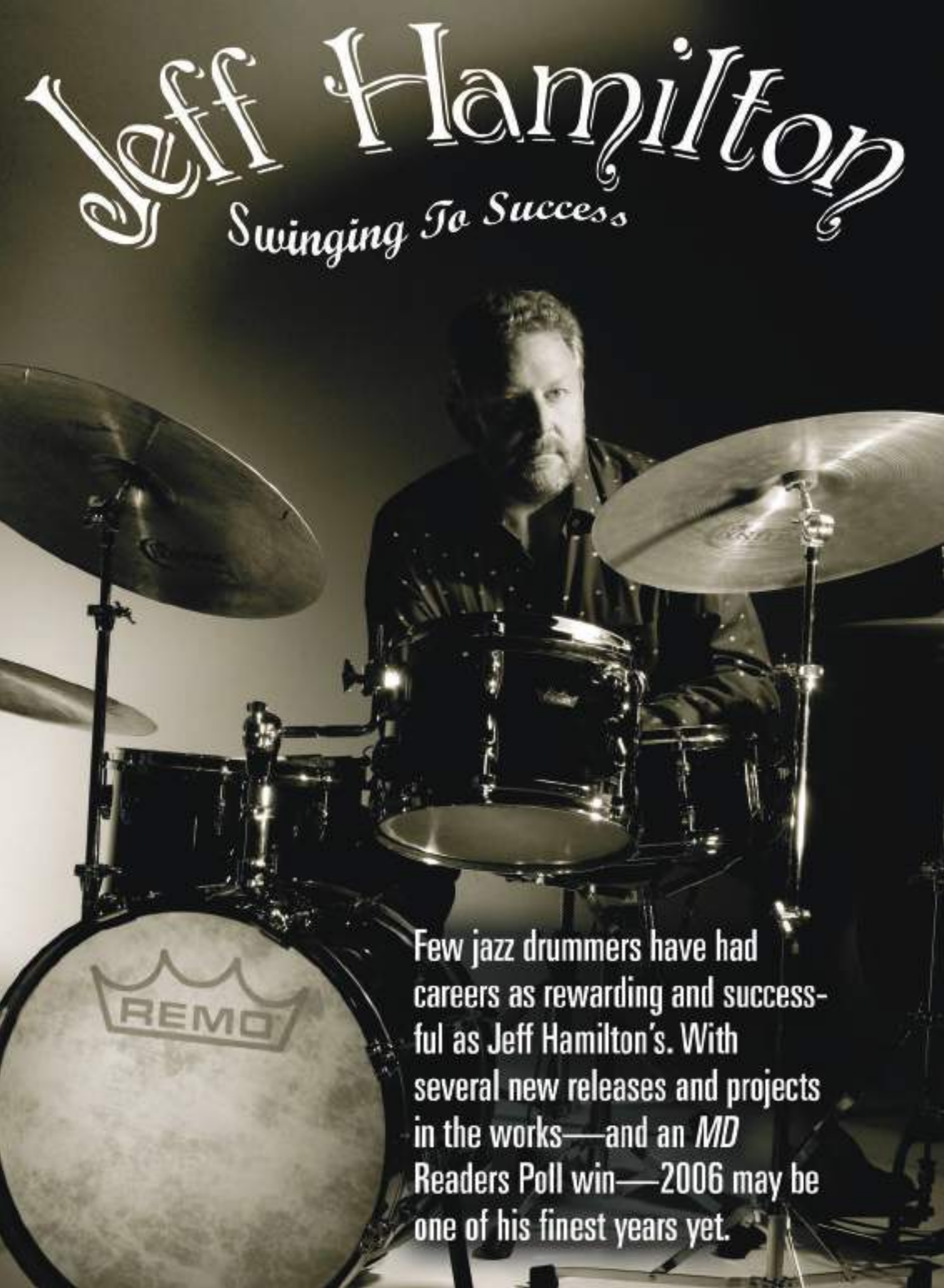
Jeff Hamilton

Swinging To Success



Few jazz drummers have had careers as rewarding and successful as Jeff Hamilton's. With several new releases and projects in the works—and an *MD* Readers Poll win—2006 may be one of his finest years yet.

The movie Field Of Dreams spouted the philosophy "If you build it, they will come." The more you listen to Jeff Hamilton talk, the more you understand that this philosophy is at the root of his musical life. If you build up experience and work at your craft, the music, and success, will come. The foundation must be built in order for the dream to be fulfilled. Hamilton's dream was jazz music.

Jeff Hamilton was born in Richmond, Indiana, and he began playing drums at age eight, spending the first five years just working on the snare drum. By the time he'd completed his studies at Indiana University, Jeff was ready to pursue a career in music. He had built the foundation, and now the artists would come.

In 1974, he began playing with The New Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. Soon after he worked with Lionel Hampton's band, followed by a stint with The Monty Alexander Trio. A childhood dream was achieved in 1977 when he joined Woody Herman And The Thundering Herd, and the following year he was offered the drum seat vacated by Shelly Manne in the LA4, alongside Ray Brown, Bud Shank, and Laurindo Almeida. That group recorded six LPs, some of which featured Hamilton's arrangements and compositions.

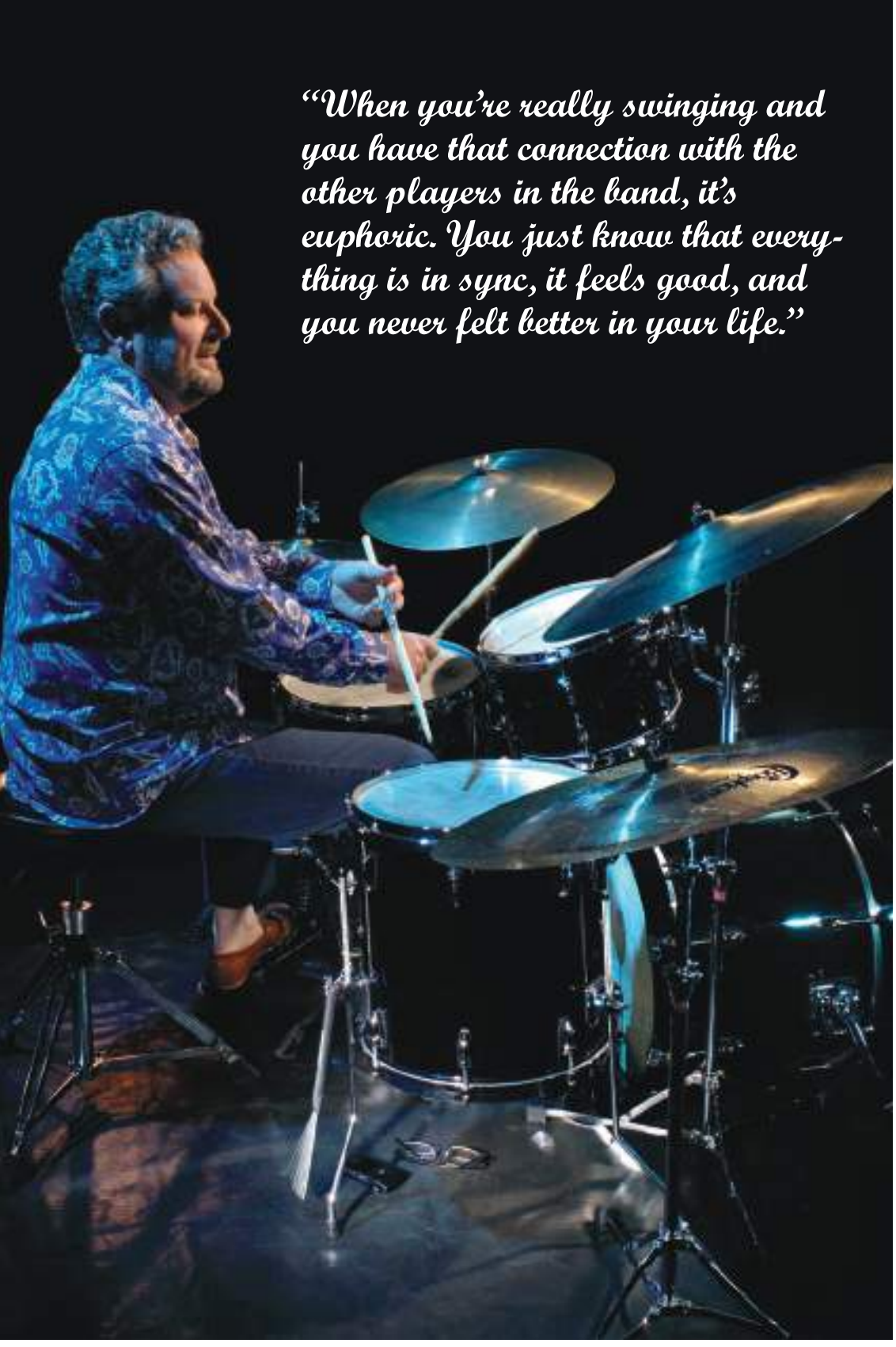
From 1983 to 1987, Jeff performed with such prestigious artists as Ella Fitzgerald, The Count Basie Orchestra, Rosemary Clooney, and Monty Alexander, all the while recording countless albums with such luminaries as Mel Torme, Natalie Cole, Barbra Streisand, George Shearing, Lalo Schifrin, and Diana Krall. The following year he joined The Ray Brown Trio, with whom he worked until 1995, when he left to concentrate on his own trio and eventually The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra.

Today Hamilton is very involved with artist Diana Krall, whose new album *From This Moment On* features The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. There are hopes for a tour to follow. Hamilton and Orchestra also appear on jazz-great John Pizzarelli's new release, *Dear Mr. Sinatra*. And Jeff's trio has a new disc out, *From Studio 4, Cologne, Germany*. One of last year's projects that Hamilton particularly enjoyed was playing on the set of the film *Good Night And Good Luck*, whose soundtrack won a Grammy. (To see a list of the hundreds of CDs Hamilton has recorded, check out his Web site, www.hamiltonjazz.com.)

There is something to be said for two kinds of mindsets. There are some drummers who wish to do it all, and then there are those who spend their entire lives working at achieving mastery of one style. Hamilton never played anything but jazz. His love of the music and quest to be an expert at this style had him listening to jazz while his two older sisters were listening to The Beach Boys. He ate, slept, and drank jazz music. He jokes, "Of course, I was forty years old when I was born."

The Los Angeles Jazz Society recently named Jeff Hamilton and his musical partner, John Clayton, Musicians Of The Year for 2006. Jeff was also voted the number-one traditional jazz drummer in *Modern Drummer*'s 2006 readers poll—all proving the philosophy, If you build it, they will come.

Story by Robyn Flans • Photos by Alex Solca



MD: You're particularly well known for your impressive, swinging brush technique. Could you give us a lesson on brushes—a little elaboration on your brush "rules"—as if you were sitting here with a student?

Jeff: First of all, my favorite brush players use the left-hand traditional grip.

MD: And who are they?

Jeff: Shelly Manne, Philly Joe Jones, Ed Thigpen, Vernell Fornier, and Papa Jo Jones. I'm not against matched-grip players playing brushes or teaching them. But I've found over the years that matched-grip players have switched to traditional grip when they study with me because it works better. That motion, where the fingers are moving toward each other, instead of down at the drum, makes sense for brushes. It's almost like your arms are resting on a table and you're bending your wrists inward so your fingers are pointing at each other. I think the left hand feels better for the sweeping motion than if you're moving your whole arm to get the sweep, which a lot of matched-grip brush players do.

The lateral motion—not striking directly down on the drum, but rather from the side—is something I really believe gives you that lush sound with the brushes. I don't like the sound of pressing down on the brush, unless you're doing it for an effect. When you're playing time, I don't think you should mash the wires into the head while you're making the circle. The lateral stroke allows you to drag the brush across the head and get a sound that Josh Freese described in *Modern Drummer* as being like pouring sand on a snare drum. That's the fine sound I want to hear.

If you're playing rudimental ideas or anything that requires technique, I go back to my first drum teacher, who said, "Don't do the doggie paddle when you play a long roll. Your hand movement should be up and down. Let the sticks bounce straight up and down." He was right when he told me to do that with sticks. But with the lateral approach for brushes, you can doggie paddle and still get a long roll or any kind of rudiment you want, and it's not a stinging sound. It's a warmer, smoother sound.

I play with my hands low to the head, but early on I didn't. Jake Hanna pointed that out to me when I was on Woody's band. He

said, "Your left hand is too high." If your left hand is too high, only the tips of the wires will be on the head and you won't get a full brush sound. I think of pressing my arm down from the elbow so that my hands are almost laying on the drum. That's how low I keep them. When I go off the surface of the drum, my wrist actually drops below the drum, but the brushes are level with the head that way.

MD: What parts of your hands and arms are doing the work?

Jeff: I use my wrists and fingers. I don't use the elbow or the shoulder. It really bothers me to see people working too hard when they're playing brushes. I oftentimes say it's a motion with the wrists like when Moe of The Three Stooges was slapping Curly, just back and forth. Let the brush drop and bounce, instead of manufacturing the bounce with your elbow. Just release the fingers. In the right hand, the index and thumb are your fulcrum. Get all the other fingers out of the way, and let the brush drop and bounce. Do it coming from the side and you'll get a lush sound.

MD: Where do you play on the head?

Jeff: I use the entire surface of the head when I play brushes. I don't just play in the middle. That gives you a big, full sound. Sometimes when I do a double bounce or a triplet, I'll start off the drum so I can start it at the rim, say at 3:00, and bounce across the drum to 9:00.

I always keep my hands opposite each other. One of the funny things you'll see with young brush players who are just starting out is that their hands almost look like a dog chasing their tail. They're going around simultaneously, instead of opposite of each other. If your right hand is at 6:00, your left hand is at 12:00. I always stay in motion. I never stop in midair while one hand is sweeping. I never let the right hand stop. It's always on the way to somewhere.

There's a purpose for that motion. It's not just to be pretty. Philly Joe Jones said you have to be pretty when you play the brushes, and if you do it right, you're pretty anyway. You don't have to think about that. The motion is pretty, but I use the motion en route to somewhere. I think that allows a smoother sound.

Sit up straight and bring the brushes to you. Don't become the brushes. Don't let them win the battle of what's in control. You see a lot of people pushing, shoving, and becoming the instrument instead of making it look effortless. My first drum teacher told me that if people see you struggling to play what you're playing, they'll think you're not very good.

MD: So after describing all of this to a student, you'd send him home to practice.

Jeff: I would give the student some patterns that would have to be diagramed to be understood, and I'd have him work on all of the things we just talked about. But what I've just told you is about six lessons' worth of material.

MD: Do you have favorite patterns you enjoy playing with the brushes?

Jeff: There are patterns I like that are from the Philly Joe Jones book *Brush Artistry*. I took a lesson with him in the mid-'70s. He spent a whole day with me, just talking about the brushes. His taking me through all of his patterns was different from what I had done with my teacher, who I had originally worked through the book with. But I was grateful I'd learned the incorrect way and then Philly Joe's way, the proper way. I had two ways of playing them. And then I came up with my own variations. I think there were twelve patterns in the book, and those are like scriptures, if you will, that you live by in the brush world.

MD: What are your favorite brushes to play?

Jeff: A brush I designed with Carol Calato at Regal Tip. I didn't love their normal Regal Tip 389R model. The wires were too lightweight for me, and I had to manufacture all the speed and crispness with finger control. It was wearing me out.

Sometime in the early '80s, a friend of mine, Mike Shepherd, who was on Maynard Ferguson's band, said, "I want you to try these brushes. I think you'll like them." They were a little meatier, with a slightly bigger handle and a little thicker-

Jeff's Drumset

Drums: Remo Gold Crown Bebop model in black lacquer finish
- **A.** 5½x14 snare
- **B.** 8x12 tom
- **C.** 14x14 floor tom
- **D.** 16x18 (or 16x20) bass drum

Cymbals: Bosphorus Hammer Series
1. 14" hi-hats
2. 20" crash-ride
3. 22" crash-ride (with three rivets)
4. 22" China

Hardware: Ludwig cymbal stands, Gibraltar hi-hat stand, DW 5000 bass drum pedal (very loose spring tension) with Danmar white felt beater, RIMS mount on 12" tom, Puresound 12-strand snares

Heads: Remo Fiberskyn FD 3 on all batters, clear Ambassadors on bottoms (muffling: one Band-Aid under snare batter at 7:00 position, 10" felt strip taped inside bass drum batter below beater)

Sticks: Regal Tip Jeff Hamilton model sticks and brushes

gauge wire. They were made in Taiwan and were $11 a pair. I played them and loved them, but they would last two gigs because I play an awful lot of brushes. When I was with Ray Brown, I would go through a pair every night. He said, "What's with these cheap brushes? Don't I pay you enough?"

I tried to find other brushes, eventually going to Cappella Swingers, which did have a stiff wire that I liked. But the grip was so small that it caused me to press in a certain way. I was torqueing so much that I developed tendonitis of the knuckle. The hand surgeon I went to asked if I had changed anything in my playing. I said, "Yeah, come to think of it, I changed brushes." He told me to bring in the old and new brushes, and he could tell right away that I was torqueing. He gave me a cortisone shot and said, "You don't need surgery. But do you know somebody who could make that old brush for you?"

So I went to Carol Calato and asked if she could make it for me. She made some prototypes, and we went through a few variations with the shaft until they had a design that really worked for me. Then Carol decided to call it the Jeff Hamilton signature brush.

MD: What are your favorite heads to play on?

Jeff: The model I developed with Remo, the Fiberskyn 3D [Diplomat]. I use them on everything. I played calfskin for twenty years. Remo wanted to design a head that would emulate calf, and this head does it.

MD: Let's talk about swinging a band.

Jeff: First of all, it's hard to describe. Anybody who plays and experiences that feeling with a band knows what it's about. A groove is a groove, in any genre. When you're really swinging and you have that connection with the other players in the band, it's euphoric. You know it's swinging and you can't really describe what it is. You just know that everything is in sync, it feels good, and you never felt better in your life.

MD: What are the important elements of the players you've worked with?

Jeff: I think the players who swing the hardest for me are the ones who know their beat and who know their inner clock. They're not afraid to put it on the table. Mel Lewis once told me what he thought the role of a drummer was: "Somebody has got to be a big sofa so the band can be comfortable sitting while they're playing.

Hamilton's Hits

With well over a hundred recordings to his credit, it's hard to select only a few classic Hamilton albums. But here are some that Jeff particularly recommends.

Artist	Album
Jeff Hamilton Trio	The Best Things Happen
Jeff Hamilton Trio	From Studio 4
Jeff Hamilton Trio	It's Hamilton Time
Jeff Hamilton Trio	Hamilton House
Clayton-Hamilton Orchestra	Live At MCG
Clayton-Hamilton Orchestra	Shout Me Out!
Ray Brown Trio	Don't Get Sassy
Ray Brown Trio	Bam Bam Bam
Ray Brown Trio	Three Dimensional
Diana Krall	Live In Paris (also DVD)

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Oscar Peterson Trio	all with Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen	
Thad Jones	Central Park North	Mel Lewis
Thad Jones	Consummation	Mel Lewis
Count Basie	Chairman Of The Board	Sonny Payne
Woody Herman	Basin St.	Jake Hanna
Terry Gibbs Dream Band	any	Mel Lewis
Ahmad Jamal	Live At The Pershing	Vernell Fournier
Ahmad Jamal	Cross Country Tour	Vernell Fournier
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Shelly Manne	any Contemporary label recording	Shelly Manne

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- Ellis Drum Shop St. Paul, MN
- Explorers Percussion Kansas City, MO
- Fork's Drum Closet Nashville, TN
- Ray Fransen's Drum Center Kenner, LA
- Jersey Drums & Percussion Edison & Bricktown, NJ
- Just Drums Toronto, Canada
- Lemmon Percussion San Jose, CA
- Long Island Drum Center Nyack, NY
- Original Long Island Drum Center Plainview, NY
- Memphis Drum Shop Memphis, TN
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- Percussion Center Houston, TX
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The 5 Hamilton Brush "Rules"

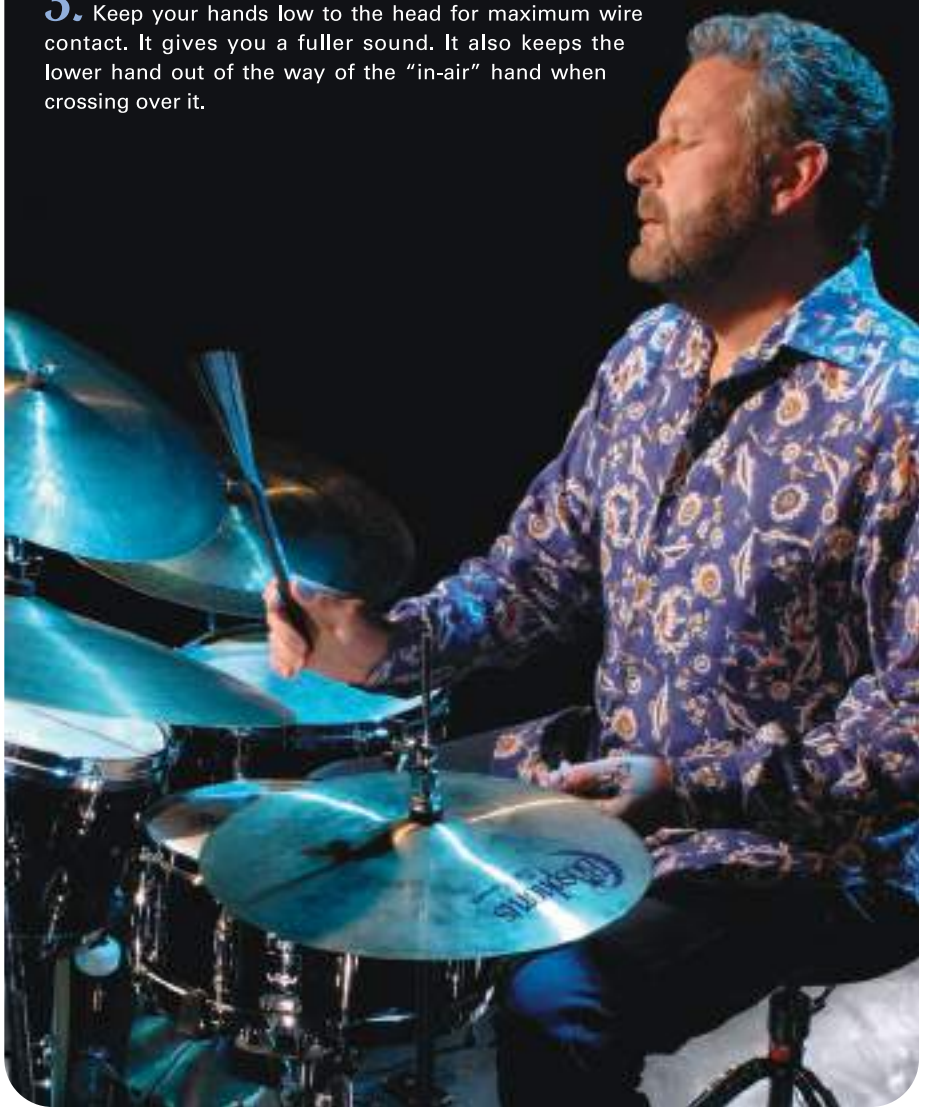
1. Always try to make lateral strokes. This provides a smoother, fatter sound even for staccato notes. It adds warmth and intensity to your sound. This is easier with a thumb-up grip in the right hand. Let the brush "flop" loosely from side to side. Often, the middle finger "locks" the brush in your grip. Allow the brush some freedom by using the index finger and thumb fulcrum. Use the other fingers for control only when needed. Try to let the brush do most of the work.

2. Cover the entire surface of the head. This provides a big, smooth, lush sound. You paid for the head, get your money's worth! It also brings more intensity into your "time" feel.

3. Keep your hands opposite each other. Don't get hung up "chasing your tail." You'll never play yourself "into a corner" utilizing this suggestion.

4. Always be in motion. Even when your brush isn't on the head, keep moving toward the next "entry" onto the head, using the lateral approach. This helps to keep the flow and intensity in your time and solo ideas. It's visually smoother, too. The audience won't get uptight watching you play these pesky, challenging little implements! Make it look easy.

5. Keep your hands low to the head for maximum wire contact. It gives you a fuller sound. It also keeps the lower hand out of the way of the "in-air" hand when crossing over it.



They don't want to be on the ceiling." That was a huge lesson, because drummers often take the time and stick it right in your face. You can't get away from it, and you don't like it. With Mel's way, it's about *offering* where the time is. But the most important thing is feeling strong about your beat and knowing it feels good and that you can offer it.

MD: You're talking about confidence.

Jeff: Exactly. Not ego, not cockiness, but confidence in knowing who you are and where your beat is.

MD: What do you think was the most confidence-boosting experience you ever had?

Jeff: I remember an early one. My first drum teacher, John McMahan, took me on as an eight-year-old when he normally didn't take anyone on before they were ten. He had a full roster, but I was recommended because I was in a summer band, a fifth-grade band as an eight-year-old. The orchestra director recommended me. He told my teacher, "I know what your policy is, but you need to take him earlier."

During my first lesson, McMahan said, "I'll take you, but you've got to prove to me that you really want this and that you're good enough for me to teach." I knew if I reached his standards, I'd be good enough. That was one of the first things I wanted to do—please him, because I respected him as a teacher. Both of my parents were really supportive, too. But they said, "We don't want you to come home each week with the same lesson. We want the next lesson. We'll keep paying for this if you're serious about it." These three people wanted me to do well at this, plus I loved it.

MD: How did you know that at eight years old?

Jeff: You get this feeling when you hit a drum, a smile jumps across your face, and you know that you haven't felt like this in your life before. You want to keep doing it, so you keep feeling good when you do it. And then I saw Gene Krupa on black & white television and I said, "That's what I want to do." He knocked me out. I liked the lead trumpet player in the Benny Goodman band and I liked Gene Krupa. The trumpet was too expensive to rent, but a used drum was cheaper, so that's how it happened.

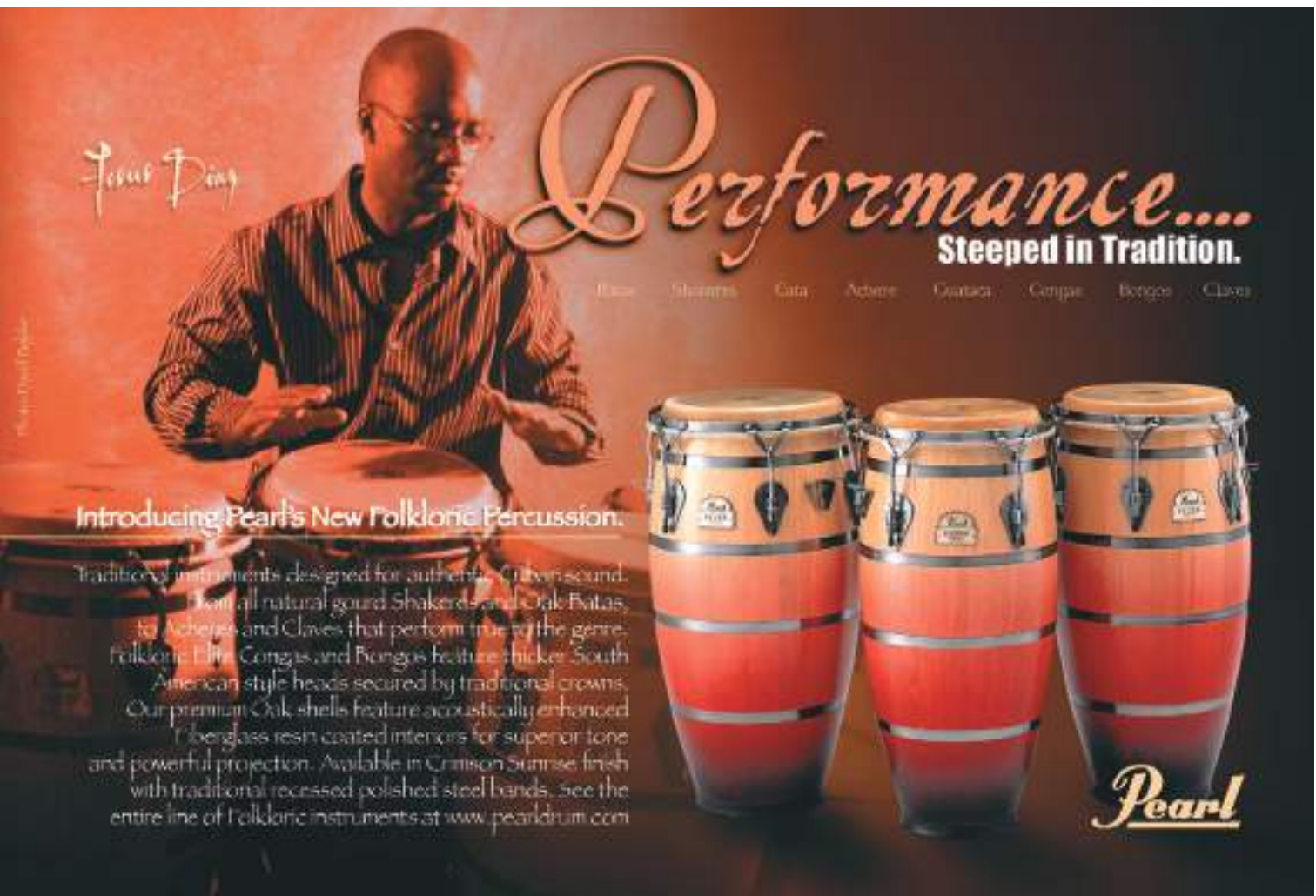
I hated piano lessons. I started at age five, but thankfully my parents let me quit. I had already learned note values and time signatures, and I understood all of the music terminology, which is why I was ahead of everybody at eight years old.

MD: How important is learning the piano for drummers?

Jeff: I think if you're going to be a drummer who just plays the drums, it's not important. But if you want to be a *musician* who just happened to choose drums as your instrument, I think it's very important to learn the instrument that has everything—harmony, melody, and rhythm. It's the whole orchestra. I think you're cheating yourself if you don't learn something about the piano and music theory.

MD: One of the things you're admired for playing is creating melodies on the kit during your solos. You change the pitch of your rack tom by pressing on the head with one stick and playing with the other, and you orchestrate the melody around the kit.

Jeff: I think to play melodies, again, you need to have the confidence to be able to do it and not feel stupid. A lot of people think you're doing "Shortnin' Bread"—tongue in cheek—for the sake of being cute. I'm actually integrating melodies and



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quoting other songs—other jazz tunes, other standards—into what I'm playing. I don't look at it as gimmicky. I look at it as trying to come up with eight or ten notes—I'm trying to create a scale—to at least *imply* that I'm playing melodies so people can believe I'm nailing every note. Of course that's impossible to do, but hopefully I can engage the listeners' ears and try to bring them along to say, "Look, I'm in this fantasy world of playing this melody right now. Can you hear it with me?"

I get interesting reactions after playing melodies. Somebody said to me, "I knew you were trying to do something, but I couldn't quite understand what it was. I never heard anybody do that." But someone else said, "I saw the camels go across the desert when I heard you play 'Caravan.'" You can only do what you hear and people hear what they want to.

But number one, you have to have the confidence. You have to know the melody and you have to look at your drums as an ascending and descending keyboard instrument and emulate the notes. I don't really enjoy when a drummer just plays the rhythm of a melody. I want to hear an ascending line to really make a believer out of me that you're trying to get the melody out of the drums. If there's an ascending line to the melody, don't go from the snare drum down to the bass drum, because that's descending.

It's obvious to me that, if the tune has a higher note in the third note of the melody, you don't start on the snare drum. You work your way up to the snare drum as that highest note. So back up, and maybe start the melody on the floor tom. You also have to be creative and look beyond the four instruments in front of you.

On *Live! Montreux Alexander*, with Monty Alexander and John Clayton, we did "Work Song." There's a part where Monty played the melody and then John played it. So I thought, "Why don't I do the same thing," so I figured it out and we did it on the record. So I was doing that early on, but I didn't have a whole piece featured around me.

The first one I did was when Ray Brown asked me to solo in his trio. I told him I wanted to try "Caravan," and he said, "Okay. We'll get off the bandstand and you've got it." And I said, "No, I need you guys to come in on the bridge." And he said, "No, no, you've got it," and this was right before we were about to go onstage one night in Japan. I thought to myself, "Okay, let's see how good you are. You've got to come up with this in the next fifteen minutes." I'm sure it wasn't the greatest thing that night, but I got through it.

That experience made me think about how you set up a solo. Play an introduction, maybe rubato, then establish the time and play the melody. That's the form of the tune. Then you solo over the form, taking maybe two or three choruses. And then you finish up by playing the melody again and doing some sort of tag or coda to end it. That's how I shaped the whole thing on "Caravan" and "Night In Tunisia."

MD: Let's change topics and talk about cymbals in jazz drumming. How do you select them and how do you use them?

Jeff: One of my drum teachers, John Von Ohlen, pointed out to me that there are drummers who are cymbal players and there are drummers who are drum players. It seems to me that the people who are the aforementioned swing players start with the ride cymbal. The drummers who are

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the phenomenal soloists and great clinicians, and those we look to as powerhouse drummers, start with the drums. Cymbals are an accessory to them. Drummers who select the ride cymbal as their main instrument, those are the accompanying drummers who other musicians are going to ask to play with again.

Jo Jones said, "A good cymbal will allow you to play for everybody in the band. One cymbal is all you need." But that's not good for the cymbal industry. Jo said he would play on the bell behind the alto soloist, move out two inches toward the edge to play behind the tenor soloist, move another two inches to play behind the trombone soloist, and so forth. He said that if it's a great cymbal, you only need one.

Mel Lewis took this from the older guys too. Somebody asked him at a clinic once why he didn't use any crash cymbals. He responded, "I do. I have three." And they said, "No, those are ride cymbals." And he said, "I have three ride cymbals too. If you ride on them, they're ride cymbals. If you crash them, they're crash cymbals."

A good cymbal should be both. And that's what I look for in a cymbal. There

A Conversation With Diana Krall

by Robyn Flans

Jeff Hamilton has worked with Diana Krall—or should we say Diana Krall has worked with Jeff Hamilton—for the past twenty-two years. The relationship began when she, a keyboard player, attended a jazz camp to specifically study with him. Now an international success—she's one of the few contemporary jazz artists to top the charts—Krall has been able to work with Hamilton in every professional setting, a pleasure so deep that it's difficult for her to express.

MD: What does Jeff bring to your music?
Diana: It's very deep, because I started playing along with the records he played on with Monty Alexander and Ray Brown, especially with the trio he did with Ray, and also the singers he played with, like Rosemary Clooney.

MD: You were a fan growing up?
Diana: I specifically went to the Port Townsend Jazz Festival in their first year because Jeff was there. I knew he played with Monty, and I wanted to study with him. It's really important for students to understand that they don't necessarily have to only study their instrument.
MD: What did you get out of it as a piano player?
Diana: How to play better—philosophically, artistically—and how to communicate. It's been a twenty-two-year process, and I'm still learning. I just had the best time in my life on the road with Jeff and John [Clayton].
MD: What do you want from a drummer? And what is it about Jeff that you like?
Diana: I've worked with Jeff for so long. I've also worked with Kareem Riggins and Lewis Nash, and I think

each of these players put everything they have into the music. They all know melodies, and it's more about what they give to the situation, which isn't just showing up and playing. It's the whole musical input. Jeff corrects me on melody, okay? I was in the studio singing "Day In, Day Out," and he took me aside and said, "You might want to check the melody in those two bars." You don't mess with Jeff on tunes. He knows tunes and he knows music.

MD: And what about his brush work?

Diana: It's incredible, especially on bossa novas and ballads. He has an incredible depth for feeling the music. If you're playing the kind of music we're playing in a jazz trio, it's important that it's swinging and driving. For me as a singer, to have someone come in and play tentatively, because they're playing with a singer, doesn't work. These guys don't do that. When Jeff comes in, I'd better be ready on the bandstand, because he's going to kick my butt as

Bruce Webber

hard as if I were a horn player. That's what I want.

Jeff comes to the bandstand to play. At rehearsal, he comes to play. Whenever you touch your instrument, it's like he says, "It's time to sparkle." You have to approach your instrument with that kind of excitement at all times. Jeff always approaches his instrument like that. It's always magical. •

are also pitches I have in my ear that I've retained from listening to Philly Joe Jones on Miles Davis's *Milestones*. I love that cymbal sound, as well as Mel Lewis's sound on *Central Park North*. My Bosphorus Hammertone series is, to me, a mix of those two cymbals.

MD: Speaking of Bosphorus, how did you become involved with the company?

Jeff: They found me. I'm really proud to say that I've never gone to any company for an endorsement, let alone a signature model. I'm proud of that. Let them come to you, which is sort of my whole motto anyway about playing music: Do what you do, invite people into what you do, and they'll come to it.

Bosphorus approached me at a trade show and asked if I could go over to their booth and take a listen, so I did and I thought the cymbals were on the right track. I liked a lot of what they were doing. That's when I decided to get involved. I went over to their shop in Turkey, went through all their cymbals, and gave them suggestions on what I thought would improve the cymbals. They didn't know me. They're artisans; they know how to

make cymbals. We came up with a line that worked for me, and they really wanted me to get royalties based on my involvement with the line. So we took my nickname, Hammer, and called it the Hammer series.

MD: Then you became part of the company.

Jeff: I had been over there with the masters and we got along famously. They thanked me for my input and I thanked them for being the best cymbalmakers in the world. Then when the company was up for sale, they put together a team of possible owners from within the company and they said they wanted me to be involved in the ownership.

MD: You left Zildjian after eighteen years. That's a long time.

Jeff: I enjoyed my association with Zildjian. They were very family-oriented. But I was playing hand-hammered cymbals during that long association. After a while, it seemed silly that I was endorsing a product I wasn't playing. I needed hand-hammered cymbals for the music and my sound.

MD: Let's talk about your association with Diana Krall.

Jeff: Diana came to a jazz camp I taught at in Port Townsend, Washington in 1985. She was a piano player who didn't sing. She was listening to the *Montreux Alexander* album and she came to that camp wanting to discuss with me what was needed to play that way, what the piano player expected from the drummer, and what the drummer expected from the piano player. It was very smart, because I probably wouldn't have thought to go to a camp to study with a piano player. So our association goes way back.

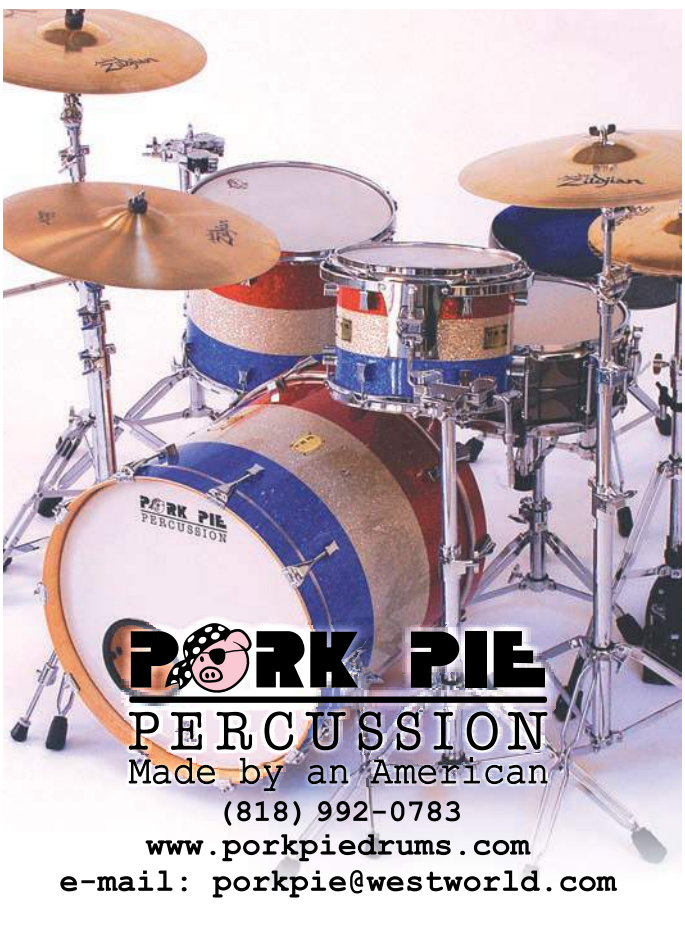
I recorded her first demo, which became her first CD, and she's very loyal to John Clayton and me. We talked earlier about finding people who you're comfortable playing with and who make everybody else sound better. And that's what she offers on the bandstand. When you have a bandstand full of people like that, the music is going to feel great. I really enjoy playing with her. And seeing her doing so well has been like watching my little sister become successful.

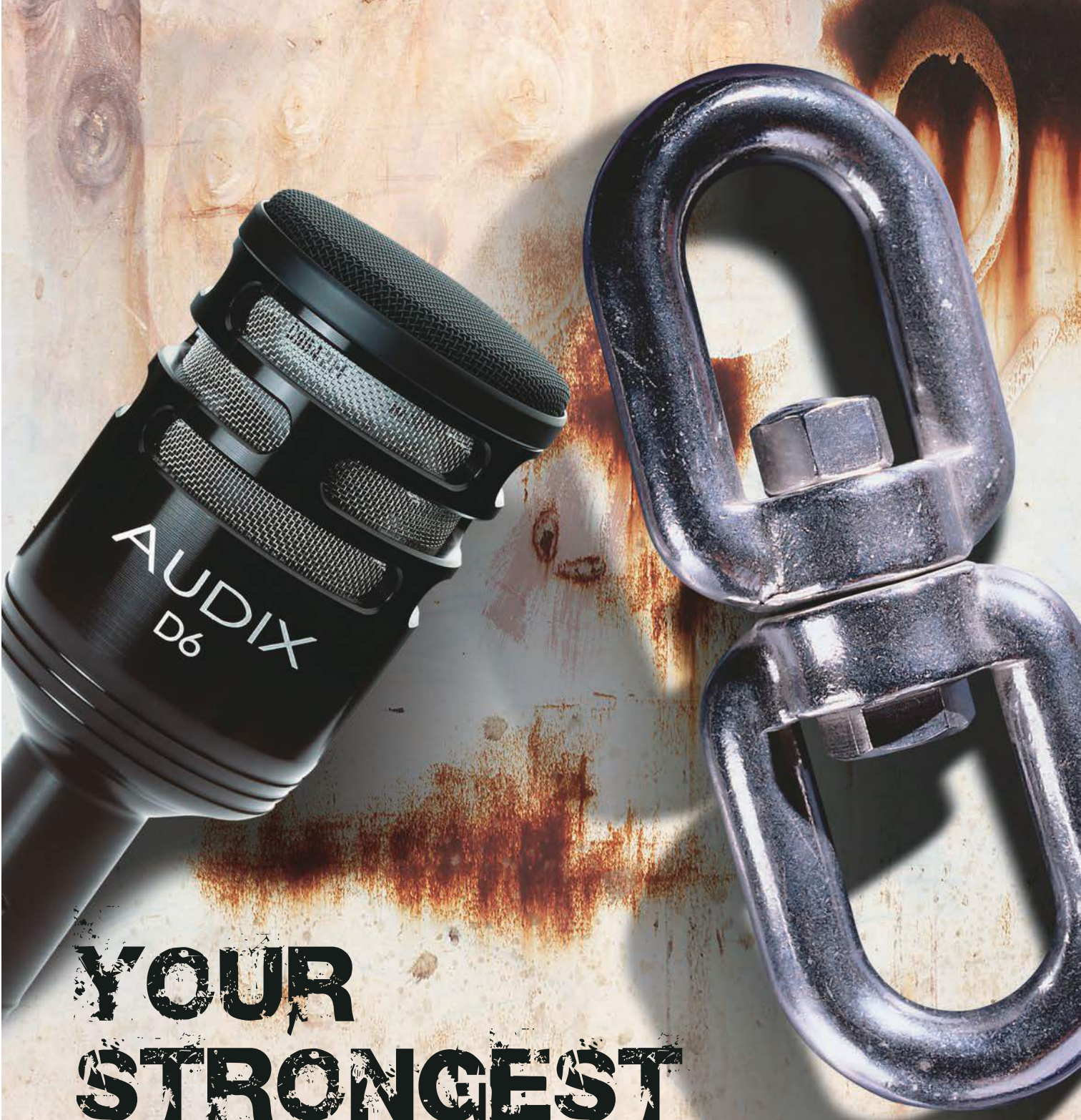
The work I'm doing now in my career, I'm doing because I really want to. I've been doing this for a while. I don't take work I don't want to do. That's a result of sitting down a few years ago and saying, You don't have to chase every gig. There's enough work to go around for everybody. You don't have to be on every gig to make the house payment.

One of the reasons I started my trio in '94 was to always have something with my name on it that would represent what *I* felt about music. I'm able to express my ideas with the right people in the band.

My two loves growing up were piano trio and big band, and I think the trio was a favorite because it was like a small big band. The Oscar Peterson Trio, with Ed Thigpen on drums, was one of my favorites. They would play arrangements that were similar to big band, so it was reminiscent of it, but with fifteen fewer people.

I think I'll probably always want to play in a big band, as long as my body holds up. It's very physical. In our case, the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra is nineteen pieces. It's nice to be in John Clayton's head when he's writing, because I think every great arranger has their favorite drummer in mind when they're arranging something. John and I go back to Indiana University, and he imagines what I'm going to do to set up the next section when he's writing it. On one hand, that's great. But on the other





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hand, it's like I'm ever-present in John's arrangements.

The back-to-back uptempos in a big band can be intense. It's muscular writing, so physically it's a challenge. Shelly Manne told me when he was in his mid-fifties, "I don't know how long I'm going to be able to keep playing big band. It's hard." I kind of laughed at him about it at the time. But now that I'm older I see he was right.

To be a leader of two bands who gets to call the shots is a luxury. I think it will prolong my career physically, because I'm not going to have a leader pointing at me, saying "drum solo" at the end of the night when I don't have anything left. It's also very rewarding when you can express musical ideas and then you find out that other people happen to like what you think about music.

MD: What do you suggest to kids who really want to play this music?

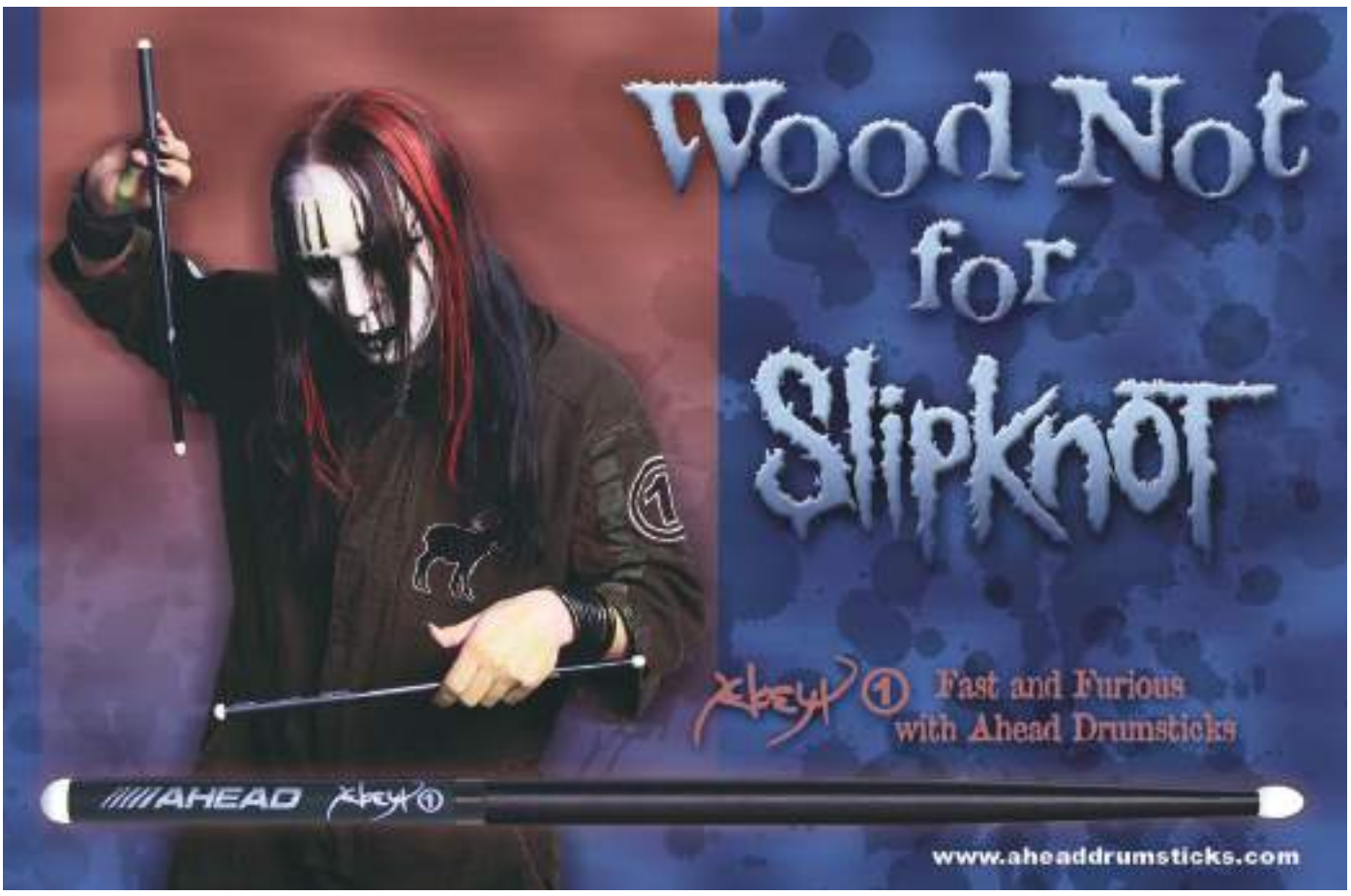
Jeff: You must have a true passion for it, and be dedicated to it. In my case, I guess I was young and stupid because I never worried about anything else except playing my butt off every night. I was told that if I did that, then everything would work out.

The better you sound, the more people are going to be attracted to you, and then they're going to talk about you. That's what my whole career has been based on, from band to band. One person introduced me to the next, and they don't do that unless you're able to fit the bill. I still live by that.

You need to decide specifically what kind of music you really love and what you're best at. You have to be honest with yourself about what type of music you love and the instrument you want to play, and follow that. Don't be lazy and don't get into it for the wrong reasons, like endorsements and whatever else goes with the music world. If you really believe in yourself and you work hard at it all the time and keep improving, it will come to you.

Aspiring drummers should also get with a mentor. A lot of other instrumentalists can go to a music school in a jazz program and be okay, but I feel drummers need to apprentice under someone. And really choose your guy who does it for you and study with them and get the information. That's the way you really learn the tricks of the trade. I was fortunate to have Ray Brown as a mentor in the music world. I played with him for eighteen years, and he was a good businessman. Besides music, I learned how to manage myself and how to book myself.

Early on I never worried about making money, because I knew I could work three, four, or five nights a week locally, which is what I did. I played in restaurants. Little did I know things would progress to where I'd have a house with a pool that's paid for in Los Angeles; it just worked out that way. But it's not about the money. People who experience playing this music and feel that will all tell you that they want to go until they drop.



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AFI's Adam Carson
The Fire Still Burns

by David John Farinella

Once simply an energized punk drummer, Adam Carson has matured into one of the most interesting players working in the genre.

Adam Carson knows how to butter his punk rock bread, citing such influences as Bill Stevenson of Black Flag and The Descendents, Green Day's Tré Cool, and Brett Reid from Rancid. Then there were a handful of unknown drummers who played at the legendary Berkeley, California punk venue 924 Gillman, where AFI, the band that Carson started with singer Davey Havok fifteen years ago, played some of their first shows.

And yet, Carson is quick to add a few more, non–punk rock names to the list. "At some point I started broadening the way I was playing, and with that I broadened the types of drummers I was listening to," he explains. "I think Danny Carey is probably the best drummer out right now. When I was growing up I was really into The Police, so there's the obligatory Stewart Copeland reference, and the obligatory John Bonham too. As with most drummers, when I listen to music, I sort of listen to it from a drummer's perspective. In that regard I'm influenced by just about everybody I listen to, whether I think what they're playing is good or not."

It's all about growing up, Carson points out. "When you're seventeen years old, you're pretty narrow in the scope of what you listen to," he says. "At least I was. I went through that phase where I thought, I'm a punk: I'm only going to listen to punk, and I'm only going to play punk—why would you want to do anything else? But you mature and you become aware of the history of music, of drumming in general, and just how much there is to know. When you think you know a lot, you realize how much you *don't* know."

Carson has taken those influences, as well as the hours upon hours that he spends practicing, and poured them into the punk-influenced rock band AFI. The quartet, which in addition to Carson and Havok includes guitarist Jade Puget and bassist Hunter, saw the release of their latest, *Decemberunderground*, shoot to the top of the charts upon its release. Quite a heady change for a band that had just glimpsed stardom with their last release, 2003's *Sing The Sorrow*, and the hit song "Girl's Not Grey," after spending the previous decade slogging it out in clubs and building what has become a stunning global fan base.

AFI (short for A Fire Inside, the band's original name) got their start in the uppermost part of California in a small town by the name of Ukiah. "The band started, literally, before we owned instruments," Carson admits. "So the learning curve was slow and gradual. But at some point it really accelerated. I think our evolution is a function of learning how to play better and being comfortable with listening to other types of music."

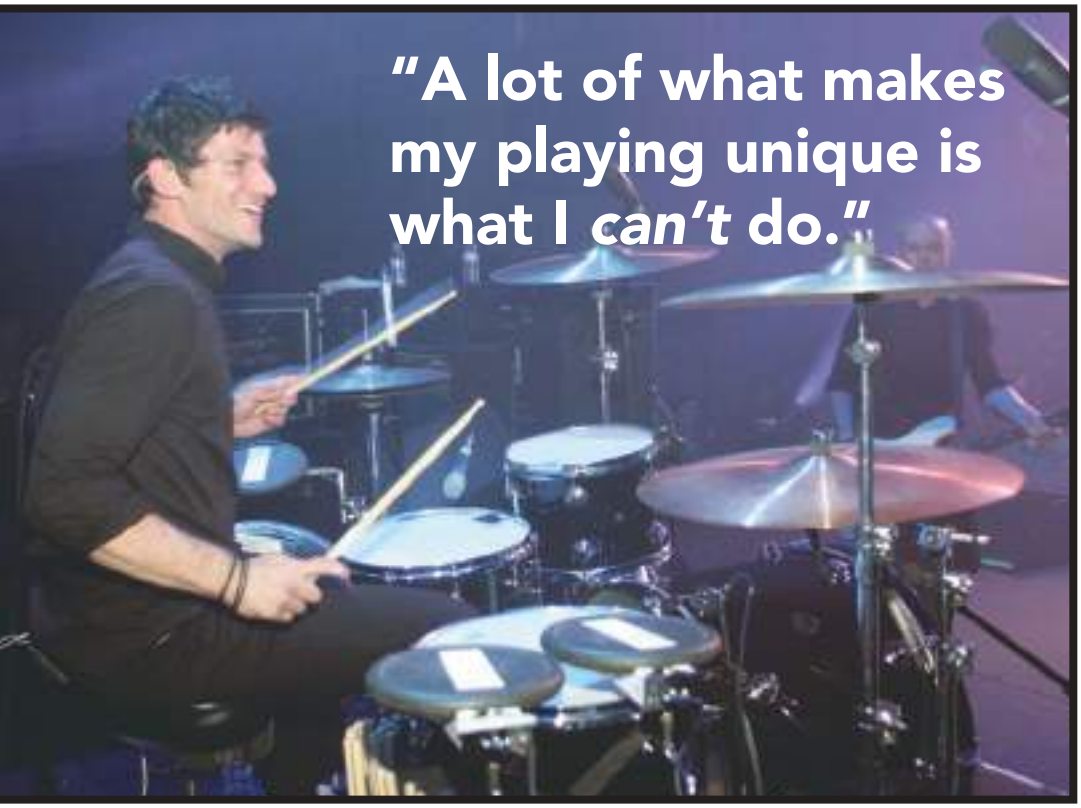
That came, he adds, after Puget and Hunter joined the band. "They brought a sophistication in songwriting to the band," Carson continues. "Hunter comes from a real musical background, and he's sort of the theory guy who understands different time signatures. If I can't understand the timing of something, he's the guy who can count it and show me, and then I'll get it. Jade is a sort of musical genius—the Edge of our band, if you will. He's a great songwriter, and he challenges me to come up with parts that move the song musically.

"My job as the drummer is to interpret what the band is writing, figure out how to make that music move, and determine where the dynamic should be," he continues. "At some point in our career, I realized I was interpreting really great songs, so I was motivated to step up and write parts that really suited them."

Examples of Carson's improved playing are all over *Decemberunderground*. The album took two years to write, polish, and record, largely because the quartet wrote nearly a hundred songs for it. "We were really prolific," Carson understates. "The songs that ended up on the record were the ones we felt were the best.

"This record was really challenging," he continues. "There are moments where the drums take a back seat to everything. That wasn't a product of not having a good drum part; that was a product of feeling like the drums needed to be very solid and simple. I feel that this is a mature record. There were plenty of times when I consciously chose to stay away from the attention-grabbing, thunderous fill."

That said, when the band comes together to write, Carson is occasionally handed complete songs with all parts in place and a general idea of the rhythm. "Sometimes I'm given just the skeleton, like a couple of chords and a melody," he says. "Sometimes when we're rehearsing, things are spontaneous and songs get written really fast. And sometimes they're labored over."



The songs that Carson rhythmically and dynamically influences are the ones that come into the band's rehearsal room as skeletons. His work on those songs, he argues, is akin to writing. "I think drummers don't get enough credit for being writers," he suggests. "There's the argument: What is songwriting? Is it just the chords and the melody? Or is it the actual packaging of those chords and the melody? You look at a band like Tool, and no one in their right mind would say that Danny Carey doesn't contribute his twenty-five percent to that songwriting process."

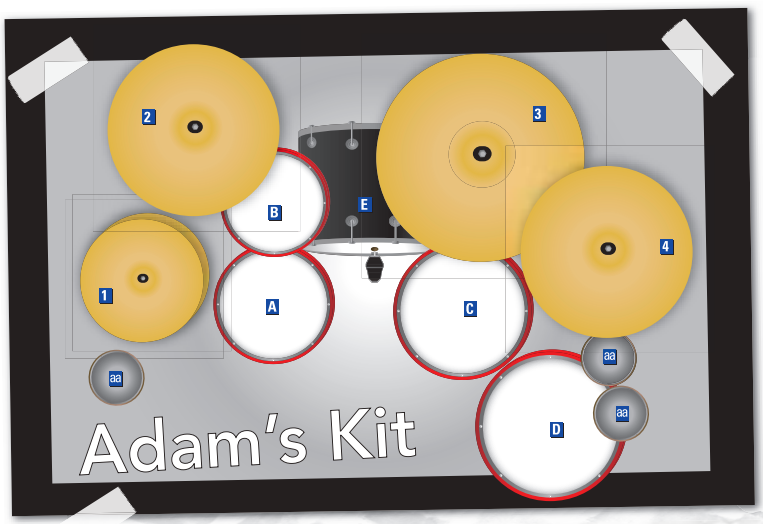
As an example, Carson points to the changes that he made to the single, "Miss Murder." "When it was originally demoed, it had a real

pounding four-on-the-floor sort of Marilyn Manson vibe," he explains. "I liked the four-on-the-floor, but there were things about the demo that I didn't care for, like the sort of Marilyn Manson aspect. I grew up listening to Green Day from early on when they were playing small shows. When we started playing this song, I noticed that I subconsciously shifted that real driving four-on-the-floor to more of something that Tré Cool would have done." Carson pauses for a second. "I probably should pay him some mechanicals or something for that. [laughs] It just sounds like something Tré would do."

For a song that was written and then labored over, Carson points to "Endlessly, She Said" and "Kiss And Control." "I feel that 'Endlessly' is the loosest, most band-oriented song on the record," he says. "Those are two good examples of songs that all the parts were obviously written and obsessed over and tailored to be a certain way. But as far as the drums go, I really had the freedom to create my own rhythms and my own vibe. Both of those songs are in 6/8. We like to jam in 6/8, because it's a fun rhythm to play in. The songs are really powerful, and the way Dave sings is really emotional, so it's easy to determine where things should go."

When he would come against a song that wasn't automatically clear, Carson had the help of producer Jerry Finn, who co-produced the band's *Sing The Sorrow* offering with Butch Vig. The Finn-Vig combination on *Sing* was slightly intimidating for Carson, especially since both have spent time behind the kit. "I knew they were going to push me pretty hard," the drummer says, "or at least not be satisfied until they felt the performance was there. But after a day or two of getting drum sounds, joking around, and having fun, I relaxed. But I certainly was challenged."

Indeed, there were times when the two producers made Carson play a part over and over, even though it sounded fine to him. "I couldn't hear what it was that they were obsessing over, but I'd just keep doing it and doing it, and eventually they'd let me stop," he recalls with a laugh. "It was a great experience working with both of them. Jerry Finn produced the record this time, and once again really pushed me to get my parts. There were parts that I came in with that I felt were awesome, but he encouraged me to play a little less on. Sometimes it was frus-



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B. 9x13 tom
C. 14x16 floor tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" Mastersound hi-hats
2. 20" K crash-ride
3. 24" ride
4. 20" medium-thin crash

Electronics: Roland, Akai Z4 sampler
aa. Roland PD-85 pad

Hardware: DW, including a 5000 series bass drum pedal (spring tension as tight as it will go)

Heads: Remo Emperor X on snare batter, coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, PowerStroke 3 bass drum batter with coated Ambassador on front

Sticks: Vater Power 5B (hickory with wood tip)

trating, because I felt like I had a unique part. But listening back now, I realize that was probably the wisest decision."

One particular song where that was true was "Kiss And Control." "That's funny, because if you listen to the song, it's the one where I really do come close to overplaying, but I think that it's suitable to the song. There are parts in the final chorus where I'm doing bass drum fills throughout, or in one of the verses I'm doing a big Bonham-esque fill. But it all seemed to fit.

"To me, the song was really a drummer song and an opportunity to throw in all kinds of flare and try to rip off Josh Freese as much as possible," he adds, laughing. "It was a process of Jerry and me figuring out what needed to be there. I think the tune turned out well because it still has that vibe of being drum-driven and holding nothing back."

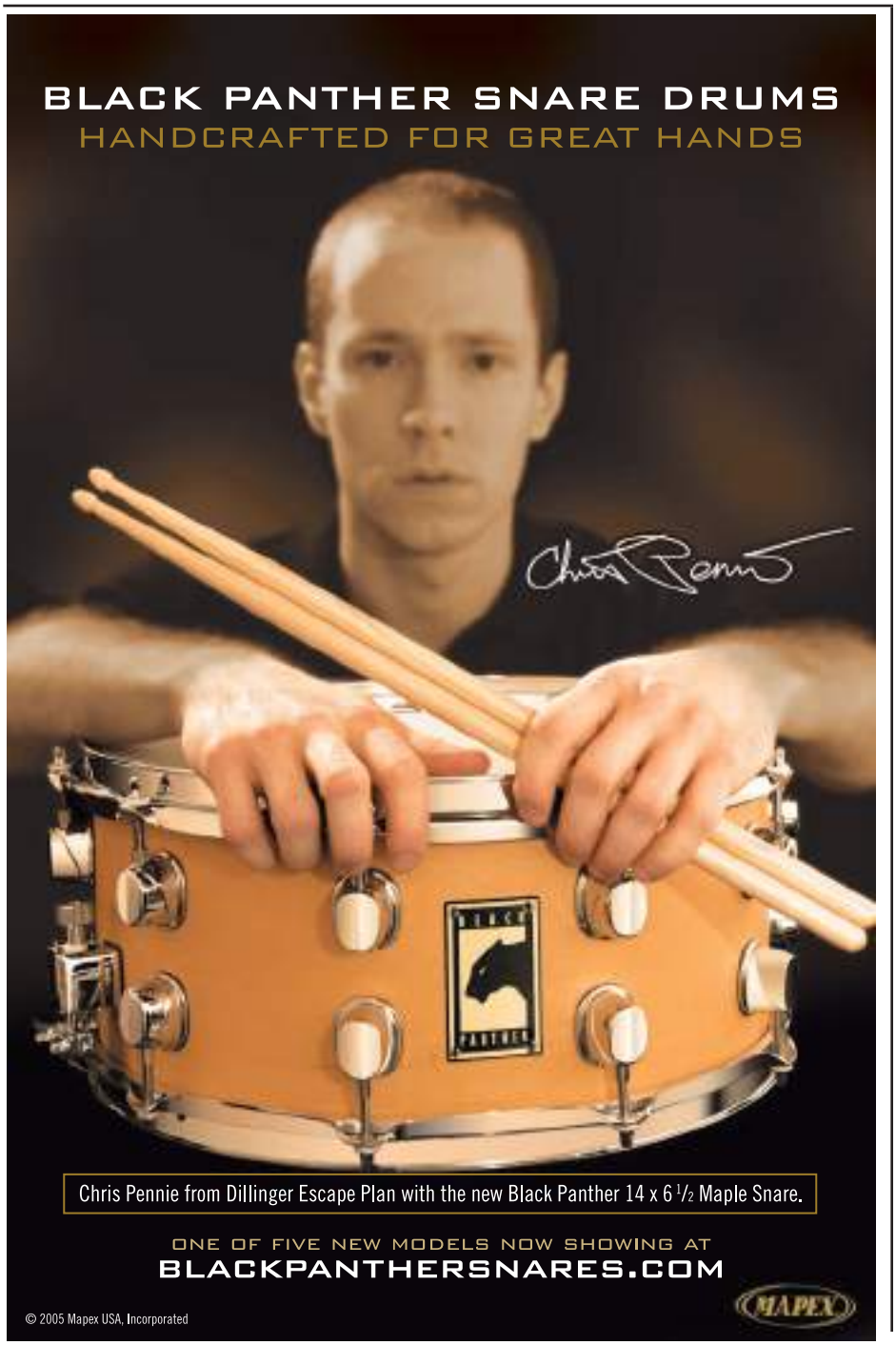
On the flip side, the song "Summer Shudder" was revisited after the band had already finished recording their performances. "It had been a year of writing, rehearsing, refining, obsessing, and recording, and I was looking forward to spending a couple of days just exhaling," Carson recalls. "But someone suggested we dust it off and try to make it work. We'd been engaged by the song and we knew it was good, but we hadn't really figured out how to package it right."

Carson wasn't pleased and decided to dig in his heels, playing note for note the performance he provided on the demo, without a single fill. "It ended up being one of the most solid performances on the record," he insists. "It really has a good pocket, and when we play it live it's one of those songs where the crowd bounces. That was a lesson to me. Had I approached it like I do every other song, I probably would have added a bunch of stuff that might have confused the listener and muddied things up."

Sure, there were songs, as Carson says, where keeping things clean was the key. But there were also songs where his playing was blending with the band's increased reliance on electronic techno sounds. Take "37mm" as an example. "It's entirely programmed," Carson admits. "But I didn't really care for how the hi-hat sounded. So I played that and we figured out a way to cut it up and make it sound live. When we were selecting songs for the record, that was one on my list. You'd think it wouldn't be, since it's not much of a performance song. But I think it's great and is really fun to try to reproduce on stage."

The electronic influences on AFI came thanks to singer Havok and guitarist Puget. "Jade has really become a student of it," Carson reports. "He has Pro Tools, Reason, and all the different programs that you need, and in the past six years he's become incredibly good at programming. He's the type of guy who is good at everything he does. We used electronics on *Sing The Sorrow* a little bit, but this time we really refined how to use them as a layer, or as a color, or as a different voice, and still maintain the integrity of the rock song."

There were times, Carson says, when loops for a song were written before he tracked his drum parts. There were also times when the sounds were created afterward. On "Miss Murder," for instance, there was a base of percussion already recorded that Carson didn't want to step on. "The electronics were providing a lot of the texture that I might have tried to provide with my drum part," he says. "There was the risk



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of cluttering it up. So sometimes I chose to play really straightforward and allow that to be the texture, to try to find that sort of synergy between the electronics and my performance."

Though Carson is a believer in adding electronics to the band's sound, he has mixed emotions when it comes to using Pro Tools for recording. "On one hand, I feel it's a tool that, if used well, can really help out a recording," he says. As an example he points to the album's opening track, "Prelude 12/21," where he, drum tech Mike Fasano, and Hunter blended a combination of floor toms and kick drums, along with stomps and claps that were provided by the band's fan club, known as Despair Faction. "We played the pattern over and over, and then we assembled it later with the stomps and claps," he explains. "I think we put together a really cool track that is powerful. We needed Pro Tools to do that."

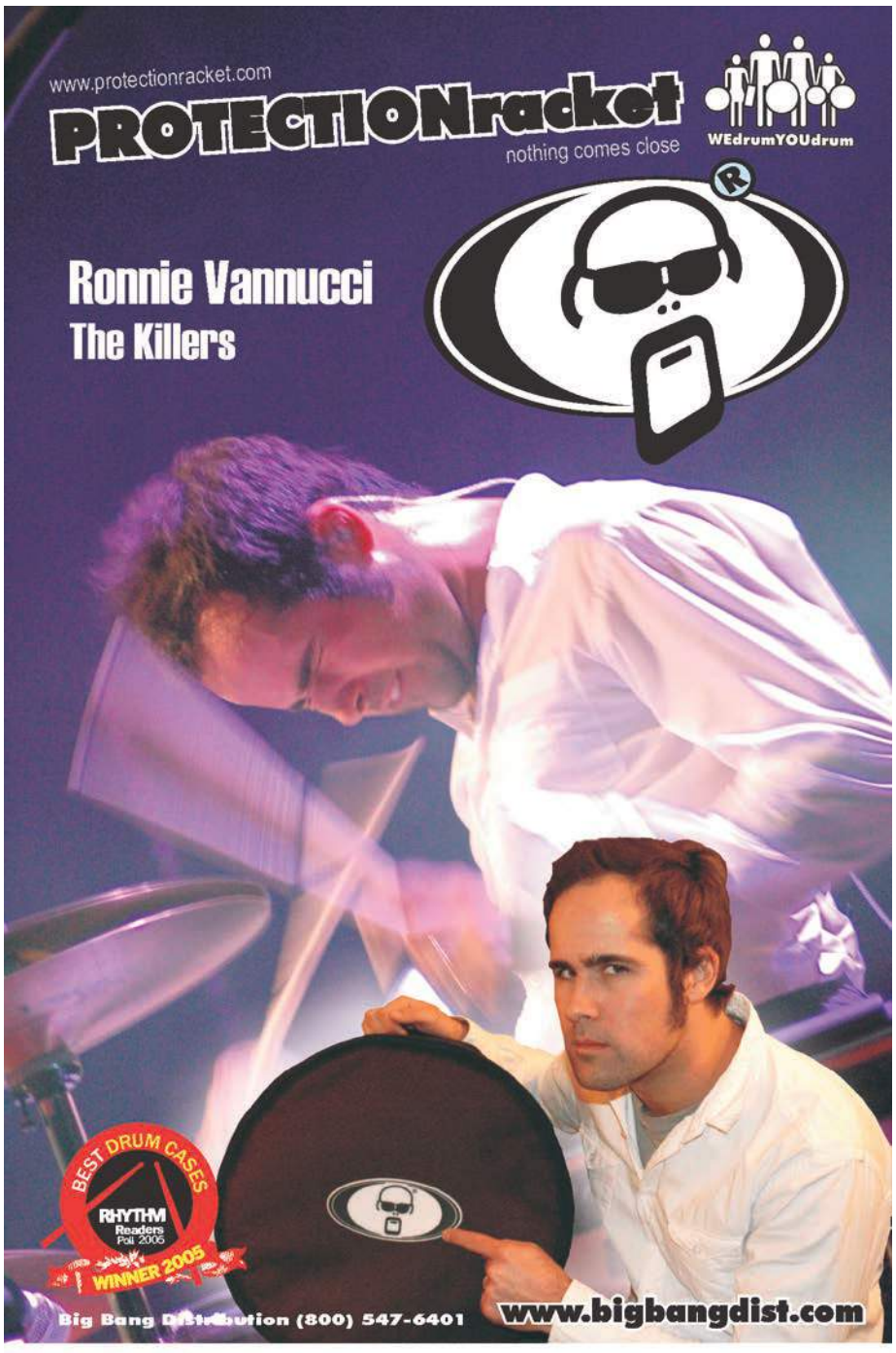
On the other hand, Carson can see where the digital tool is used to rescue substandard drummers. "I think there are so many scared A&R men out there who are afraid that their band nobody knows is going to fail if the drums aren't spot-on," he says. "The life can get stripped out of the drums if everything is done through a grid and on Pro Tools. In fact, there's a song on our last record that I feel has a certain swing to it live that isn't reproduced on the record because we paid too much attention to Pro Tools. So when we went into this session, I was a little more hands-on and more concerned about the results.

"The fact is, I'm not the greatest drummer in the world," Carson modestly states. "I'm the type of guy who can really be helped out by digital editing. But as much as what I *can* do, a lot of what makes my playing unique is what I *can't* do. I think it's important to be aware of that and not use Pro Tools to just strip all the life out of a performance.

"I grew up listening to bands that were incredibly human in their performances," he continues. "They simply weren't the best players in the world, and neither am I, and I think sometimes that's what gives a band a lot of character. Keith Moon was one of the greatest drummers in the world. But imagine if he was in a band right now that just got signed. I'm certain that somebody would try to filter his stuff through Pro Tools. And what would you end up with?"

As humble as Carson wants to be, he doesn't just rely on his natural talents to pull off the parts he puts down on AFI's albums or plays during a live set. Rather, he spends hours upon hours at home listening to music and practicing. On the road he travels with a Roland V-Drum kit on the bus, and he warms up playing rudiments on a practice pad before every show. He was never, he admits, a player who learned from lessons. "I never took lessons, and now I'm kind of too busy to do it—although every time I'm on tour I'm like, 'Yeah, when I get home I'm going to call Carter Beauford and take a lesson.' Every time I go to Guitar Center, I think I should buy one of those videos and watch that guy do all that weird stuff," he says, laughing. "I'm self-taught. I'm sure there are a million bad habits that I have, and at some point I think I should address them."

In the meantime, Carson continues to learn from classic recordings. Specifically, he says he spent a lot of time listening to Nirvana before heading into the studio to record *Decemberunderground*. "I've always been really interested in the way Dave Grohl writes drum hooks," he says. "If you listen



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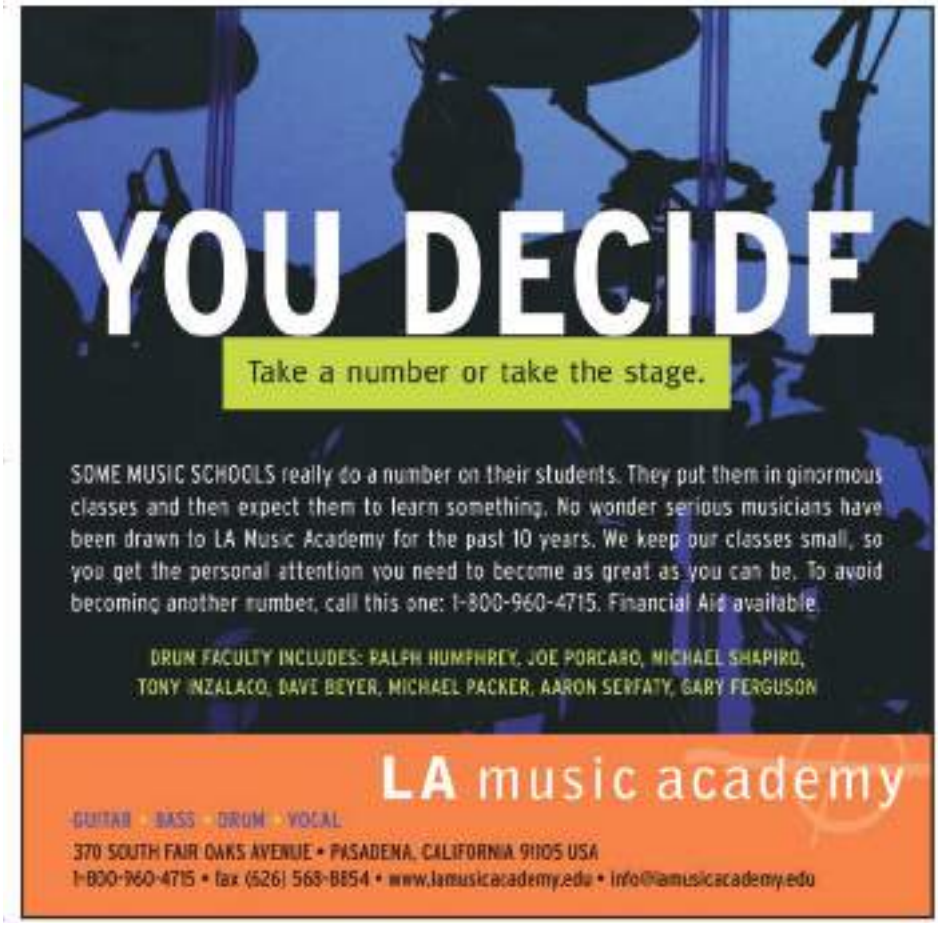

Adam Carson

to any Nirvana song, there's a drum hook. And it's not just drummers who notice them; if you see any guy driving down the street listening to Nirvana, he does the drum fill on the steering wheel. I was hoping that somewhere in our record I could write some sort of simple fill that stuck out. I'm not sure if I really accomplished that, but I tried."

It wasn't a matter of memorizing Grohl's parts, Carson says. "I was becoming aware of how the drums can be used as a hook." He did that by listening to the songs on an iPod and playing along on his kit. "It's a good way to listen to music, it's a good way to keep in shape, and it's fun. You can play exactly what the drummer is doing and try to learn that style, or you can play off the beat and learn how to accent different things, making your part work in and out of the other drummer's beat. I also like to play along with electronic music or hip-hop—anything where the groove is very consistent. That helps with timing, and it helps you learn how not to speed up or slow down. It's not the most scientific way of learning, but I've found that it really helps me."

Practicing, Carson adds, has not become tedious to him. "I simply love to play the drums," he says. "It's what I do for a living, and it's what I do for a hobby. I think it really defines me as a person both musically and away from music. I think drummers are certain types of people, and I feel like I'm one of them. So I spend a lot of time rehearsing and trying to stumble on new things. This may not be the case with most drummers, but I find that I go through periods where I sort of stagnate and I feel like I'm not learning much. Then I'll stumble on a simple little idea, maybe some sort of polyrhythmic thing, and the development or the evolution of my playing increases dramatically for a little while—until it levels off again."

After a short pause, Carson adds, "I'm not trying to sound like I don't respect the foundation of drumming, because I really admire people who can do it well. It's just that I was stuck in a van on tour for too long to really get in there." His punk rock forefathers would be proud.

To hear Adam with AFI, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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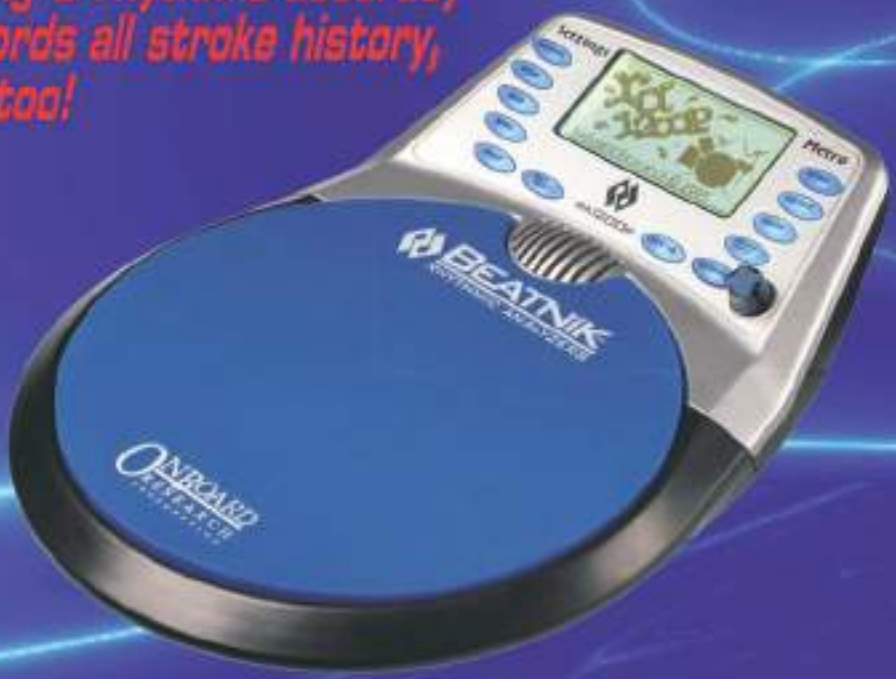

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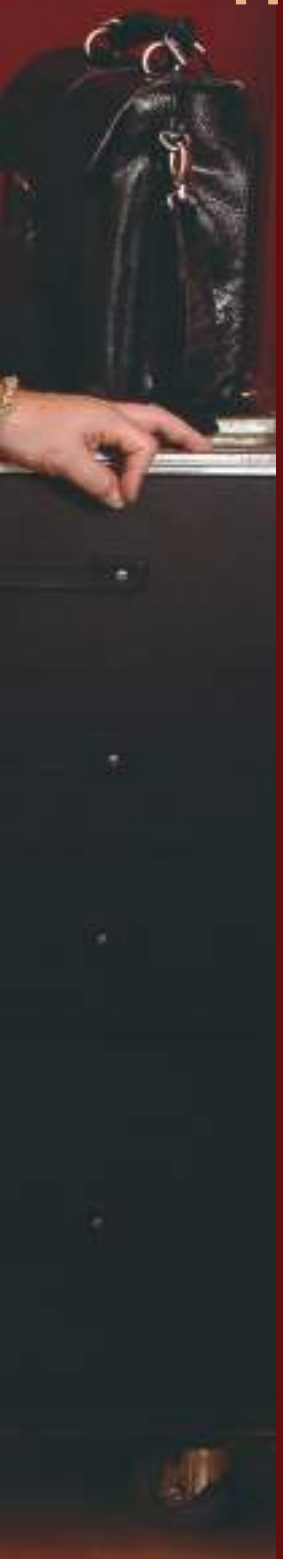


It's often said that a country drummer can either be a top-level touring pro—or an in-demand session player. Chris McHugh has figured out a way to excel in both worlds.

Chris McHugh has learned what makes him the happiest. At the beginning of his career he was determined to be a studio player, so he made his way from Camden, New Jersey to Nashville, Tennessee, where he joined Christian rock band Whiteheart. After five years of recording and touring with the group, McHugh decided to cease all road work to concentrate on his initial goal of becoming a session drummer. His plan proved successful. In fact, in 1999, he received a call to work on country superstar Keith Urban's first album.

When Urban asked McHugh to go on the road, the drummer initially resisted, but ultimately gave in because of his love of the music and fondness for Urban. It turned out to be the best decision McHugh could have made, because it convinced him that, indeed, he could have the best of both worlds: being a session ace and a touring pro.

The only problem with wearing so many drummer hats is time—or the lack of it. When *Modern Drummer* caught up with McHugh recently, he was between dates recording Urban's new album, as well as working with Jamie O'Neal, Rascal Flatts, Lonestar, Trace Adkins, LeAnn Rhimes, and Sara Buxton.

Check out this recent itinerary: McHugh was in San Francisco one day for a live video shoot for Wal-Mart. The next day he was in Carmel, California for a corporate performance for publishing mogul Rupert Murdoch, followed by a concert in Paso Robles. He immediately left there to perform a huge, double-bill concert in Detroit with Urban and Kenny Chesney. Then McHugh immediately went back to San Francisco to shoot a video, and *then* he took the red-eye to Nashville to record with a new artist for three days.

When asked about his crazy, break-neck schedule, McHugh smiles and says, "I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it."

Photos by Rick Malkin

MD: How did you get started on this crazy journey?

Chris: I started playing drums at age five. My older brother Dan started to play drums, first on boxes. I don't come from money. We were lower middle class, so if any of us wanted to do something like that, it had to be met with a lot of determination. If my parents realized we were in something for the long haul, they would support it.

When Dan was about twelve he got a paper route, saved his money, and bought a cheap set of drums, which he set up in the basement. I would play them before he got home from school, without him knowing about it.

My oldest brother, Larry, played bass and guitar and was in a couple of bands starting in high school, so I was always around music. At my age, I was just learning about The Beatles on reruns of *The Ed Sullivan Show*. So I just started playing, and then got into bands in the school music program. When high school came around, I was playing in garage bands.

MD: Any private lessons?

Chris: I had a couple of lessons with some legitimate guys. But mostly my training involved sitting in a basement with headphones on, playing to records.

MD: Did you have any particular drum idols?

Chris: John Bonham, and then Phil Collins and Bill Bruford. I liked a lot of the prog stuff at that age. As I got a little older, I had my Neil Peart phase. He was a massive influence, if for nothing else, just the energy he puts into the instrument.

I started to do sessions at around twenty, and I really got into the idea of being a session player. With that in mind, the chops stuff took a back seat to improving my groove.

MD: How did you do that?

Chris: I got into some trouble when I was fifteen, which eliminated some options in my life. I quit high school and started to work in a music store, stocking shelves and unloading trucks. Right around that time, *Musician* magazine came out. They had good articles with session players and producers, and at that point I made a conscious decision to be

involved in the music business to some degree. I wanted to play drums and be in a band.

MD: What steps did you take to that end?

Chris: My older brother knew a lot of people who were on the periphery of the studio scene in the Philadelphia/New Jersey area. He wrote his own material and would go into a studio and cut demos, and he'd hire me to play on them. We would talk a lot about the greats of the time and how they did it. That was the Steve Gadd/Jeff Porcaro period. Vinnie Colaiuta was just breaking in around then.

MD: What were your first studio experiences like? What did you learn about playing in the studio versus playing live?

Chris: The two main things I came across were playing with a click track and playing with even velocity so that the drums sounded consistent. I remember reading an interview with [Nashville recording legend] Larrie Londin in *Modern Drummer* about some endurance exercises. One of the things he was pointing out in this particular article was that a groove will falter if you can't hit the backbeat with consistency. The tone of the drums suffers too.

Larrie explained an exercise that you could do sitting in front of the TV with a practice pad. You set your metronome to 60–80 bpm, and just do single strokes for fifteen minutes. The goal was to even out your hands. If you're right-handed, your right hand tends to be a lot more consistent and have more control than your left.

I was trying to keep my head in that mentality. The owners of the music store where I worked would let me set up a

drumkit upstairs in the stock room, and I would practice this stuff on my lunch break. I would eat as fast as I could and play as long as I could up there.

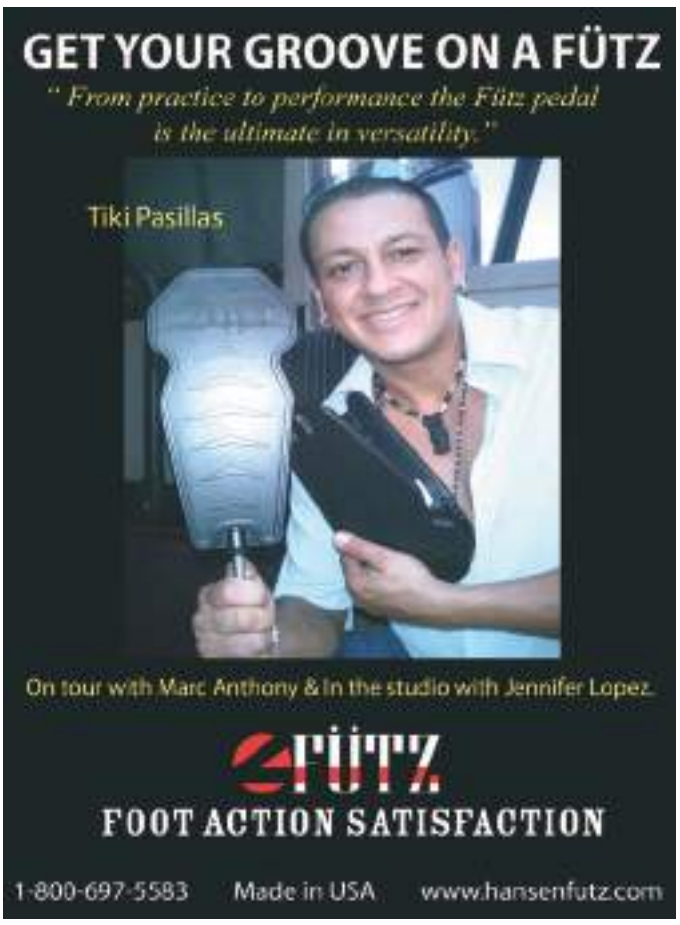
MD: What was your first big gig?

Chris: In the summer of '84, I heard about auditions in Nashville for Whiteheart, so I went into a local studio, made a demo tape, and sent it to Billy Smiley of the band. I went into the studio and played a Phil Collins kind of groove on a drum machine, and then I played over the top of it, to show that I could play time. I also put a solo on the tape, plus a couple of tracks I had recorded with local groups. Later I got a call from Billy saying they were having a cattle-call audition.

So I flew down to Nashville. I didn't know anybody there. The auditions were set up in a little demo studio, where they could record and listen back and compare. About fifteen guys auditioned. Eventually they whittled it down to me and another guy, and they were going to fly us down to Nashville separately to each do two weeks of rehearsals and then a weekend's worth of gigs. I was the first guy to go. We did a rehearsal, and after the second show they said, "We're not even going to bring the other guy down." I was twenty at the time. That March I moved to Nashville, and then we started a forty-city tour.

MD: What did you learn from the experience?

Chris: The number-one thing was to know the songs and the parts, but still bring your own style to them. In a subtle way, it's a lot like session playing. A lot of it is about subtlety. It's funny, but until you get to a certain point in your studio career, the less "color" you have, the



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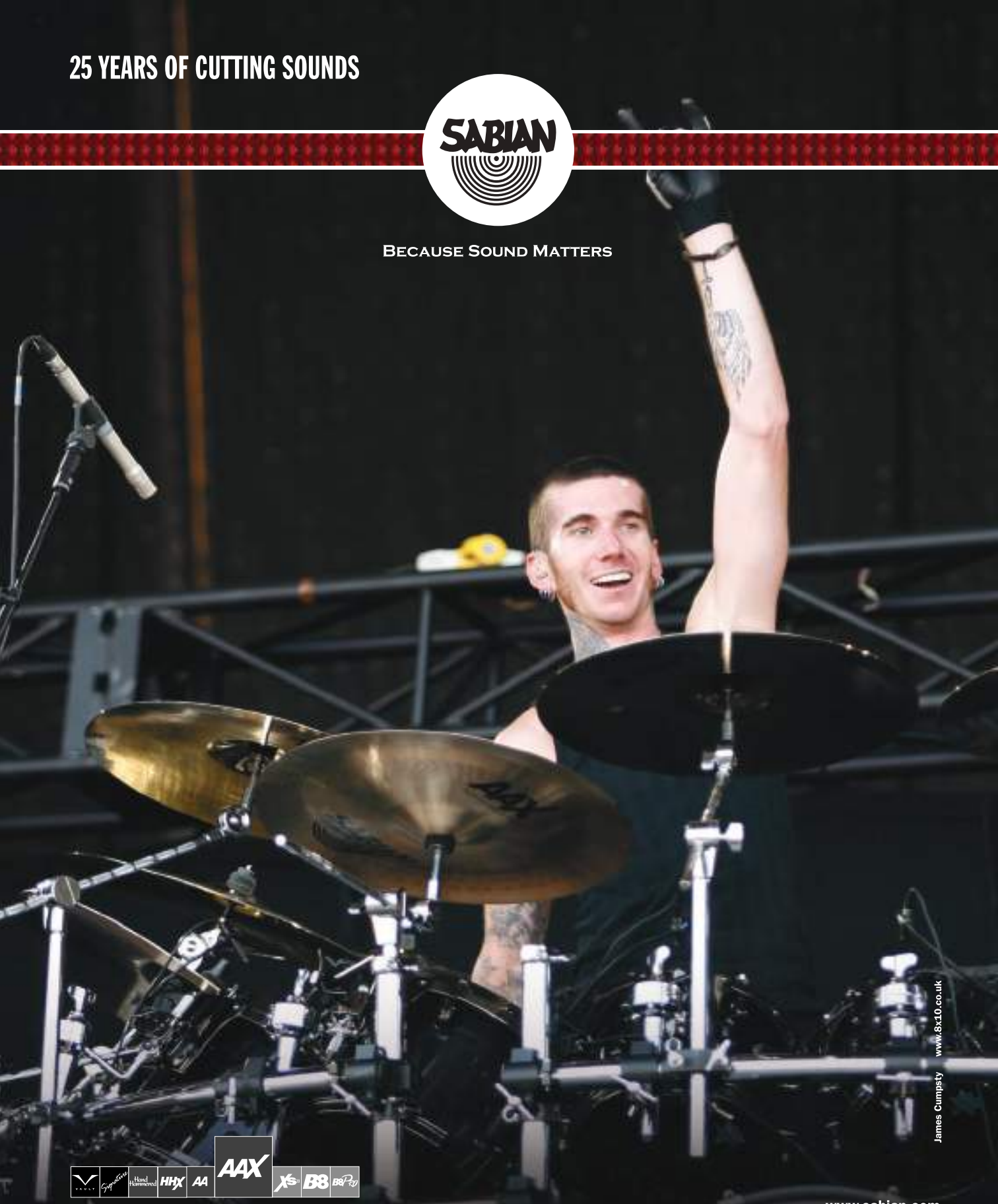

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better. Eventually you can leave a little of your signature on a track, but not in the beginning.

When I first started with Whiteheart, more than half the songs were played to a Linn drum machine. The Linn would be used for percussion parts, or it would play the intro and first verse, and then I'd come in on the first chorus. I had some experience doing that, but it wasn't until I got into the situation where I was playing with it all the time that I could hear myself flam along with it. Frankly, I wasn't comfortable playing with a machine, and I had to figure it out. So I bought a Linn and got to work. Eventually I got better at playing along with it and finally lost my fear.

"Until you get to a certain point in your studio career, the less 'color' you have in your playing, the better. Eventually you can leave a little of your signature on a track."

MD: When did you start getting into session work?

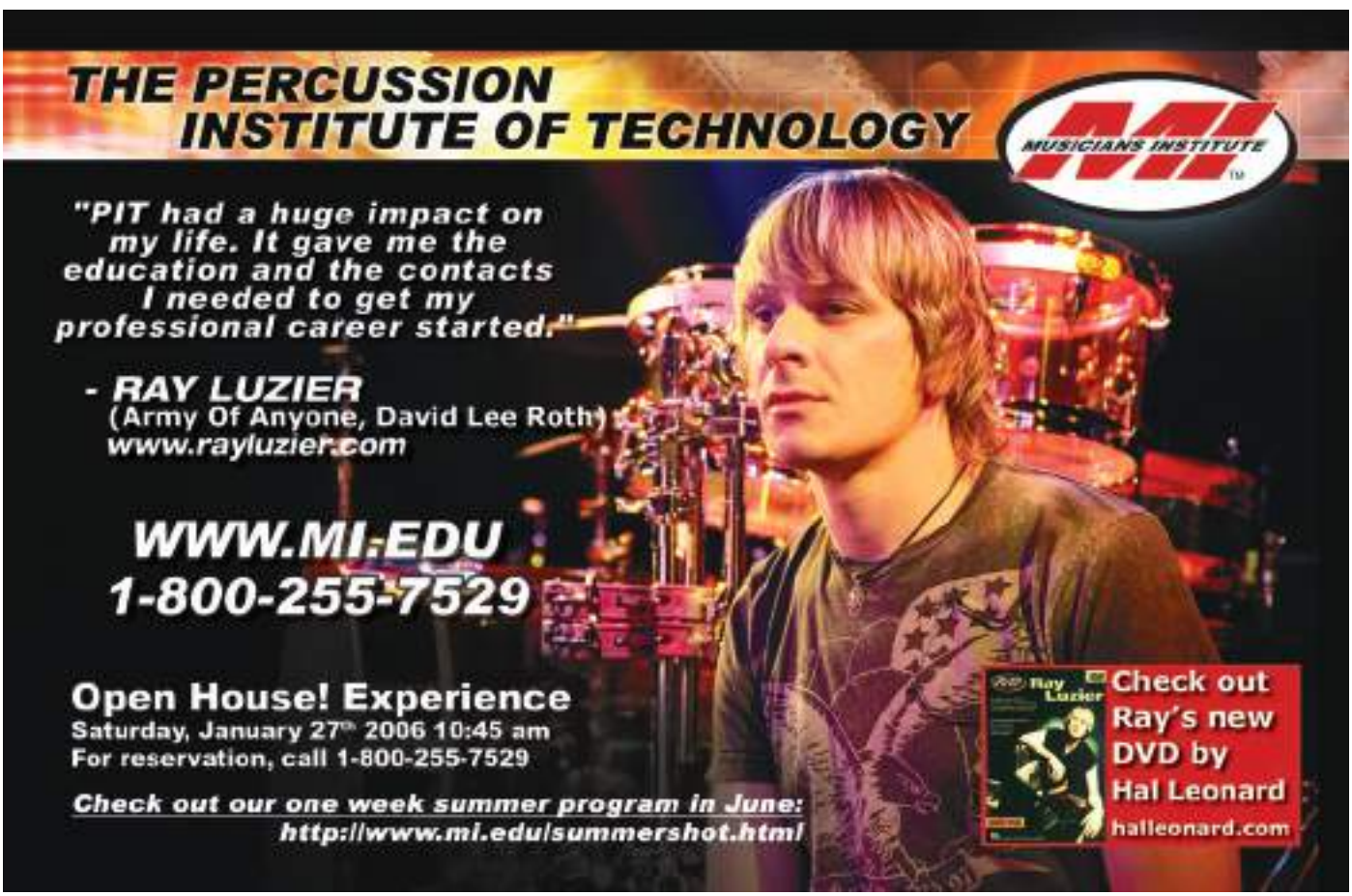
Chris: Around the summer of '85, Billy Smiley started to hire me for demos and then a few records. I realized I really enjoyed session playing, even though there were some challenges.

MD: Such as?

Chris: I had to deal with the idea of grasping a song in a musical genre I didn't like. I was a definite "wear your heart on your sleeve" kind of guy, and if I didn't get the song, I couldn't play it. That's not good. You have to perform the song to the best of your ability, because you're doing it for someone else. This artist you're working with loves the song. Or maybe he doesn't, but the producer does, and those are the two people you're working for. I definitely left a lot of sessions thinking, "There's no way they're ever going to hire me again."

MD: Were there times you just didn't cut it?

Chris: Oh, yeah. Nashville sessions work in blocks of three hours. A producer has in



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mind what he has to get done budget-wise in those three hours, and if you don't get your part or it's not what he's after.... What I would do is say, "Hey man, I know I can get this better, but I don't want to be on the clock and I don't want to cost you any money. Can I come back after lunch and replay it?" I did a lot of that.

That first year in Nashville, I worked on a few albums, but I was doing a *lot* of demos. When I first moved to town, I met Larrie Londin. I knew he had the drum shop, D.O.G. Percussion, so I went in and introduced myself. But he carried the conversation. Larrie asked how long I'd been in town and what I was doing. And then he was gracious enough to let me come and watch him do sessions. I learned an incredible amount of information from doing that.

MD: Like what?

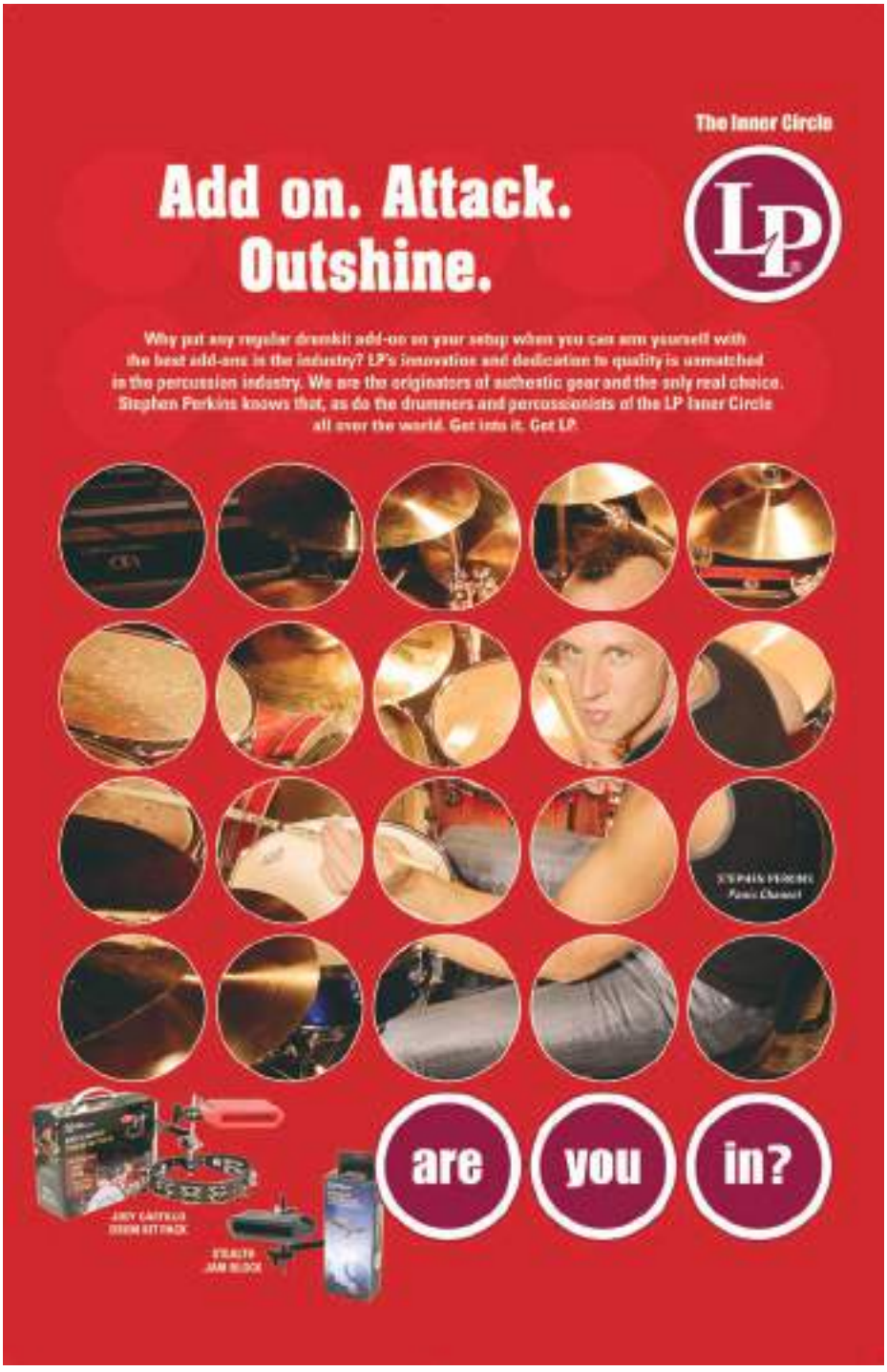
Chris: From studio politics, to drum tuning, to a drummer's relationship with engineers, to a drummer's interaction with a producer and an artist—and the number-one thing: leading the session. When Larrie was on a date, he ran the show. I saw the authority the drummer needed to have, and because of that, everything seemed to go a lot smoother. It was, "Everybody ready? Let's go." There would be the count and everybody was in. I learned that it was the drummer's place to get everybody in line, not in a holier-than-thou kind of way, but just as a leader.

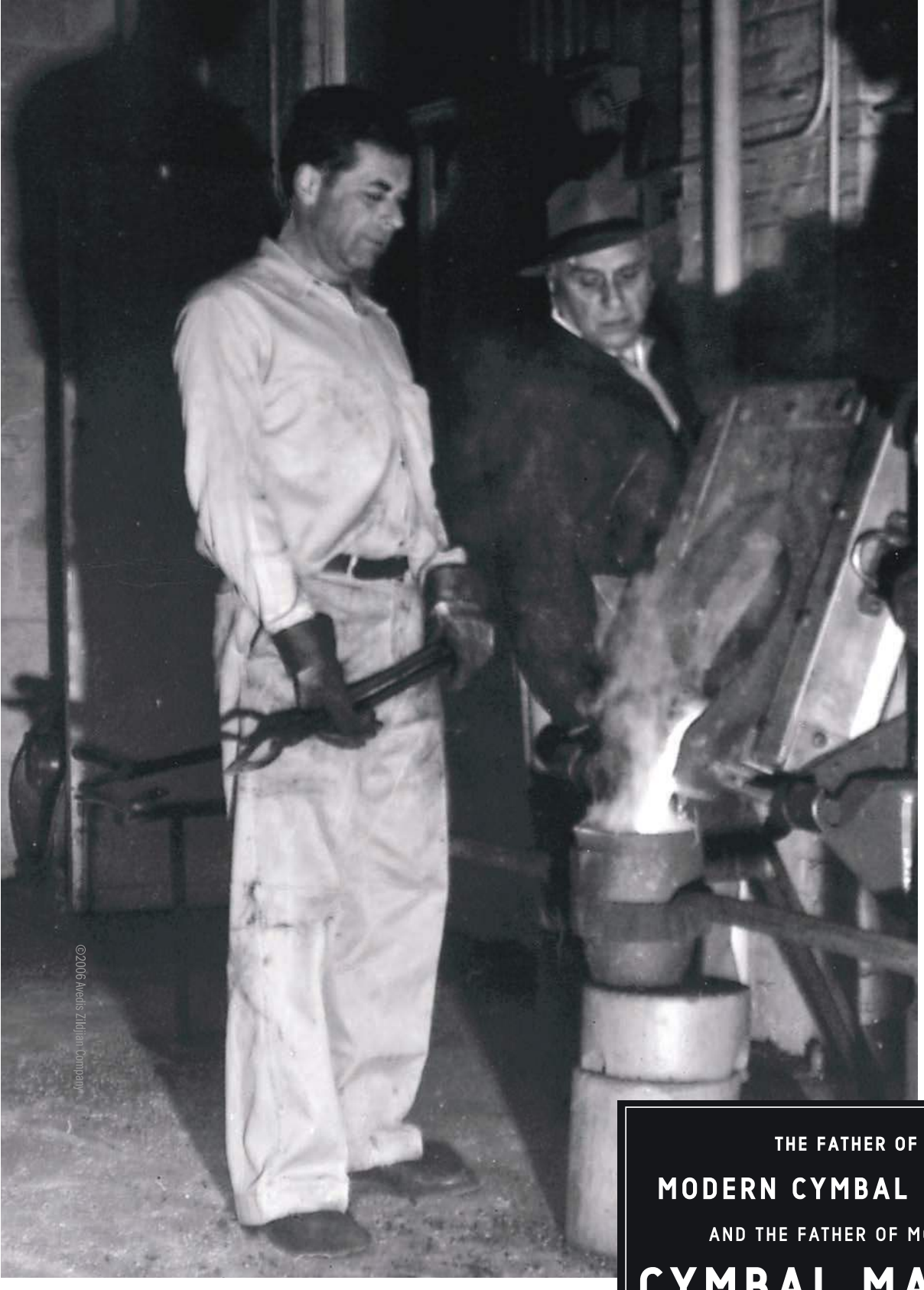
You can hear what it's like to be in a session, but until you actually see it, you just don't know. I was lucky to see it from one of the best ever. Larrie was a big, powerful man, gentle and caring, with a lot of passion about what he did. All that came out on a date. So I saw that you could stay within the parameters of what it is to be a session player and still interject a lot of your personality.

Larrie was the guy on the periphery of my career who always seemed to give me moments of enlightenment. One time, much later, I had gotten into my first situation where I was triggering samples, getting ready to tour with Amy Grant. I had a Forat sampler, and I was having a lot of trouble with it. We were at a rehearsal studio, and Larrie happened to come by to pick something up. I said hello to him in the hallway, and he asked me what was going on. I said, "Well, the rest of the band left for lunch, but I'm here trying to get this trigger thing to work." He said, "Let me see what you're doing." One thing people don't realize about Larrie is that he was one of the first guys to really get into electronics. He had a great knowledge of it, so he went in and saw that I was doing things a little differently from the way he did. He never once said I needed to do what he did, but he said, "Let me try to help you figure out why it's not working." Being able to hang with Larrie and see how things were done was amazing.

MD: What album were you working on with Amy?

Chris: I played on three tracks on Amy's *Heart In Motion*. One of them was "Every Heartbeat," which went high on the pop charts. The disc sold something like five million units. That's how I got into this thing about wanting to trigger, because her record was mostly drum machine. I





1955
Avedis Zildjian III and Armand Zildjian (left) preparing to pour castings.

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thought it would be cool to emulate those sounds live. Using the Forat machine, we were basically changing drum samples for every song. Even on the ones that were more acoustic-sounding, I had stereo samples of analog room sounds that I was triggering.

I did two tours with Amy, and I've done a lot of her records. I toured with her until about '95, when I decided to stop playing live, period. I turned down every offer to tour so I could stay in town to do sessions.

At first, it was hard. But the next few years went fairly well. In '98, I got a call from a friend of mine who had been working with Garth Brooks, and he told me that Garth had this idea of cutting a bunch of music that wasn't country. That turned out to be the Chris Gaines project. The idea behind the music when we were recording it was just to have fun. He's a really great singer, which a lot of people don't realize. That record took a lot of heat, but if you go back and listen to it, it's a really great record. Don Was produced it, and that was the moment when my session career really took off. And I didn't tour at all…well, not until 2004.

MD: What made you decide to go back out on the road?

Chris: I had started playing on Keith Urban's records in '99. A friend of mine, Matt Rawlings, was producing the record, and that was the first time I met Keith. We did two days of pre-production, some loop programming and stuff. I'd hardly done any straight country sessions, and when I got this call, I thought we were going to do an R&B record, since his name was Keith Urban. [laughs] I also figured it was R&B because they wanted me to do a couple of days of just loops. When I got to the demo studio at the producer's house and met Keith, I started to realize it *was* a country record.

We did loops and went in and tracked the record, and I really liked Keith. He and I hit it off, and I ended up working on his two records after that. Then we were on the back end of the third record, *Be Here*, when he started to joke around about my going out and playing live with him. The talk got a little more serious, and eventually I agreed to do it. We did a sixty-city tour in the fall of 2004, and I loved it.

MD: Why did you enjoy it so much?

Chris: I hadn't been out in so long. It was nice to get out and play live. And it's funny, but when I would go back home on days off to do sessions, I really could hear how playing live was helping my playing in the studio.

MD: How so?

Chris: It had to do with energy. And it had to do with realizing what works in theaters and arenas and what doesn't—more of a simple approach, but knowing when to shine too. And it was good to be in a place again where I could work on my chops. After all of that live work, I had another level of technique to draw from.

I think playing live also affects your overall energy. When you're playing on stage you can see an immediate reaction in the way people are moved by what you're doing. It reignites the whole feeling. We're all creative people, and if you're huddled in a room, working on music, you don't realize there are thousands of people out

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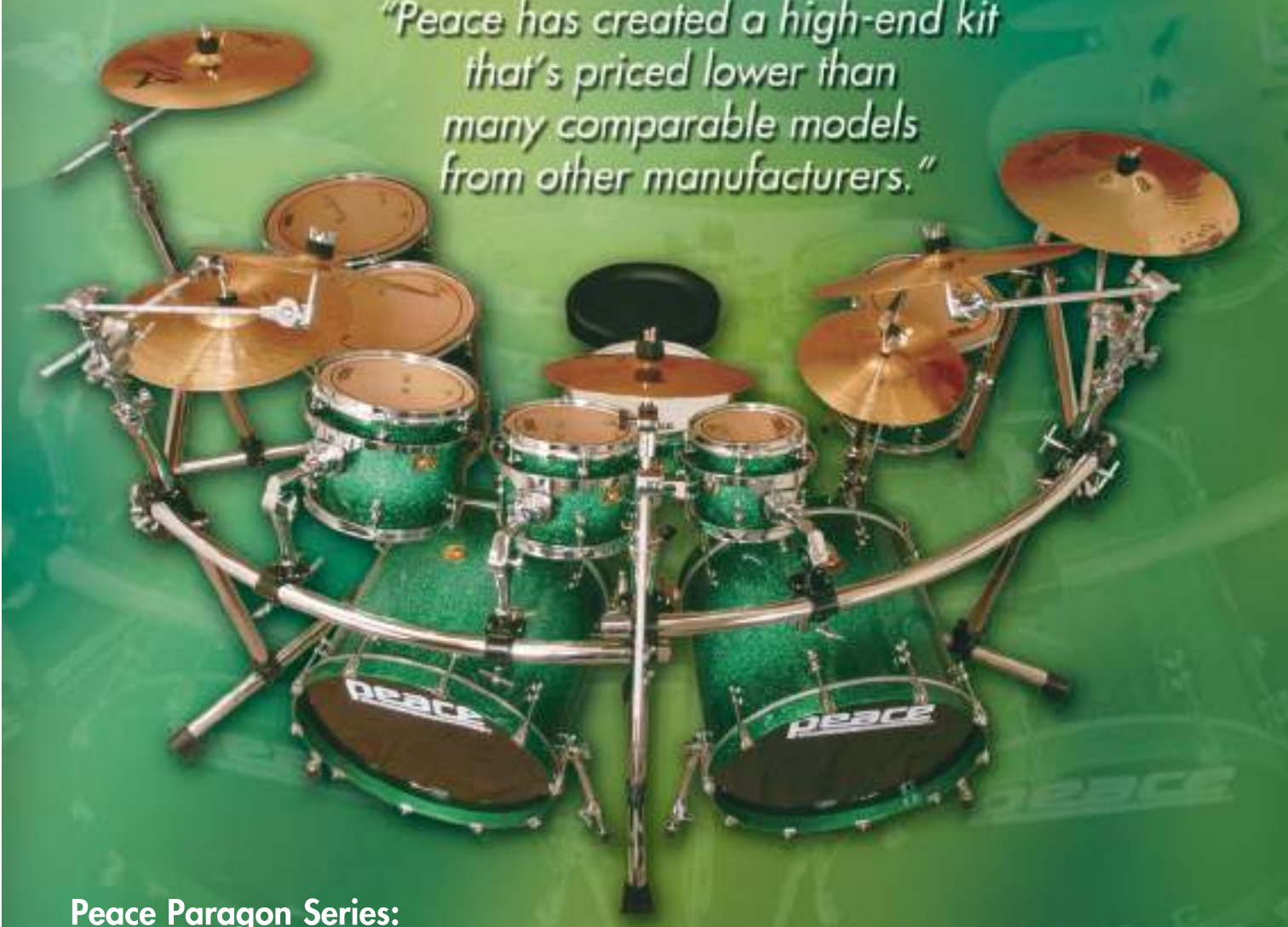

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there who are really getting what you're doing and are moved by it. It's great to work in both worlds, instead of just one.

It's funny, but every producer said to me, "You going out and doing this tour has lit your fire." Some of it is confidence, too. There is no better confidence-builder than playing live. And now, with hard-disc recording, studio work is even less real. Playing live has become the closest thing to what it was like when I first started doing sessions. I'm not getting down on technology, because in a lot of ways it's made the recording process more pleasant, but….

MD: Do you use any electronics in Keith's show?

Chris: I use the program Ableton Live, Version 5, which is basically a hard disc recorder. In Keith's show there are some loops and a couple of segues that are on it. We have click tracks on there too, because we're using some animation that's locked to the tempo of the song.

MD: How much leeway and freedom does it allow you?

Chris: I'm Keith's musical director, and I have the opportunity to change any of the arrangements, which we do a lot. With Ableton Live 5 you have the capability to edit loops or use clicks. I'll actually take loops or percussion patterns, or maybe we'll have a keyboard part on there, load them into Pro Tools to do the editing—cut out bars or add bars, or change the tempo—then load them back into Ableton Live.

Whenever you're using any backing material live, it's always a concern to change it. Maybe something is a great tempo in the studio, but it doesn't work live, so it has to be

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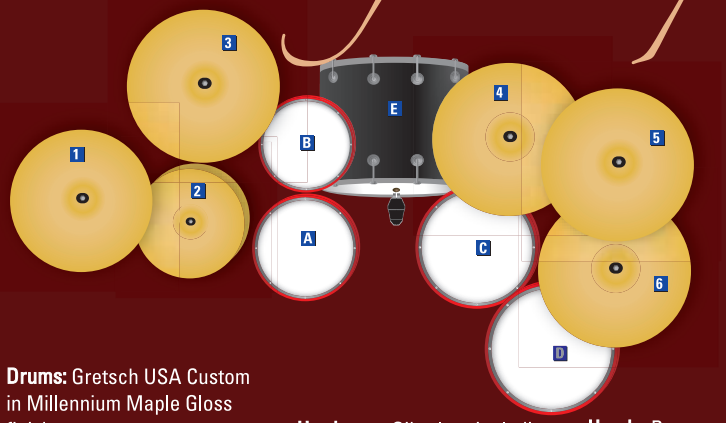
McHugh's Setup



Drums: Gretsch USA Custom in Millennium Maple Gloss finish
- **A.** 6½x14 brass snare
- **B.** 9x13 tom
- **C.** 16x16 floor tom
- **D.** 16x18 floor tom (not in photo)
- **E.** 18x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 19" AAX crash (not in photo)
2. 15" Vault hi-hats
3. 20" AAX crash
4. 22" Vault ride
5. 22" AAX crash
6. 22" Vault Chinese

Hardware: Gibraltar, including bass drum pedal (tight spring tension) with Danmar Zoro model square felt beater

Sticks: Regal Tip 2B (wood tip)

Percussion: Toca

Electronics: Apple G4 with 15" monitor, Digi 002, Pro Tools, Ableton Live 5

Microphones: Shure

Heads: Remo coated Emperor on snare batter (Moongel for muffling) with Renaissance snare-side, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms (no muffling) with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, coated PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with smooth white Ambassador on front (small hourglass-shaped pillow inside drum, felt strip on front head)

kicked up a couple of bpms. This program gives you the ability to change the tempo without messing with the pitch. It's opened things up so much. Rather than being a boat anchor as far as locking you into something you can't ever change, it's opened the window a bit.

MD: What are your favorite songs to play with Keith live?

Chris: Frankly, there isn't a song I don't like playing. But one of my favorites is "Days Go By." That one to me has a lot of energy, and it broke a lot of rules as far as what could be acceptable on a country track. It's very rock-oriented. There are double-time sections, and then the bridge is in half-time. I love that kind of musical moment, because that first bar of when you go into half time, where that downbeat is and where the next backbeat falls, is *it* to me. When you do that in an arena, it's awesome to feel the whole audience gasp.

I also really like doing the tunes that are brush-based, like "Making Memories Of Us" and "You'll Think Of Me," which I didn't play on the record—Matt Chamberlain came up with an amazing

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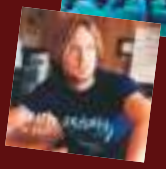
Urban Listening

Chris McHugh On Record

Artist	Album
Keith Urban	(TBA, November '06 release)
Rascal Flatts	Me And My Gang
Jewel	This Way
Owsley	Owsley
Keith Urban	Be Here
Keith Urban	Golden Road
Little Big Town	Road To Here
David Mead	The Luxury Of Time



His Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Yes	Fragile	Bill Bruford
Genesis	The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway	Phil Collins
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
The Police	Zenyatta Mondatta	Stewart Copeland
Bryan Adams	Reckless	Mickey Curry
The Beatles	all	Ringo Starr
Mindy Smith	One Moment More	Shannon Forrest
Rush	Moving Pictures	Neil Peart

part—but I enjoy that live.

MD: What can you tell us about Keith's new album? [The disc is untitled as of this interview.]

Chris: The first single is "Once In A Lifetime," which is an uptempo rock tune that is really cool. My part is kind of based around an 8th-note riff that Keith was playing on the acoustic guitar. He wanted something that was driving, but not overpowering on the verses. The verses are fragile, lyrically, so he wanted it to drive, but he didn't want it to slam. I came up with a loop that we used and built my part around that, leading up to the chorus.

Keith's goal on this entire record was to have as few overdubs as possible. Interestingly, that minimalist approach highlights the drums more. His goal was to have the whole kit be louder and more in your face. Keith plays drums, so he's very cognizant of the instrument and can make great suggestions.

MD: It sounds as if you've found a great balance between live and studio work.

Chris: I'm really happy with where my career is right now. I thought going out on tour would negatively affect my studio career, but I've realized I *can* do both. I've also realized how playing live has had such a positive affect on my approach in the studio. Yeah, I don't want to quit playing live ever. There's no reason to, as long as I stay healthy. And with age comes a certain soulfulness: The emotions run deeper, and you have more to offer. There's no reason to ever quit.

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God Forbid
VINNIE FIORELLO
Less Than Jake
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Jack DeJohnette

A Master's Music

by Ken Micallef

Courtesy of Vic Firth Inc

With the passing of Elvin Jones, Jack DeJohnette may be the world's greatest living jazz drummer. But to many, he remains an enigma. Jack has worked as a sideman to jazz royalty for the past forty years, and he has recorded a dozen or so brilliant solo albums. Jack has also been a member of one of jazz's most celebrated and long-lived trios with Keith Jarrett and Gary Peacock.

In any situation, Jack's drumming speaks for itself. It's a gritty, swinging, propulsive, inspired, and innovative combination of past, present, and future rhythms that is instantly recognizable. Ask any jazz drummer to name their heroes, and Jack will appear near the top of the list.

Jack's drumming personality has taken on many roles through the years. The most recent is an explosive demonstration of power and finesse on Trio Beyond's *Saudades*, which includes guitarist John Scofield and organist Larry Goldings. Including material from Tony Williams' Lifetime, plus the songs of John McLaughlin, Joe Henderson, Miles Davis, Larry Young, and John Coltrane—as well as original compositions—*Saudades* revives that '60s/'70s spirit of flamethrowing improvisation, with each member pushing the other to virtuosic heights.

"We stimulate each other," Jack says of Trio Beyond's hookup. "John and Larry both have that ability to play very sophisticated and abstract, as well as to swing hard and get really funky. We have a pretty broad spectrum."

Jack's most recent recordings include *The Elephant Sleeps But Still Remembers* (a collaboration with Bill Frisell), and *Music From The Hearts Of The Masters* and *Music In The Key Of Om*, both on his own Kindred Rhythm/ Golden Beams label and available from JackDeJohnette.com.

Ever inscrutable and mysterious, Jack is a tough interview. "You want to pick my brain?" Jack laughs. "There's not much going on in my brain." Funny how the masters among us are almost universally humble and self-deprecating. Jack DeJohnette speaks softly, but carries a mighty pair of sticks.

JACKIE MCLEAN

Jackknife (Blue Note, 1966), Demon's Dance (Blue Note, 1967)

One of the things I remember about those sessions is that Jackie fought to have me appear on the records. Albert Lion at Blue Note had his favorite drummers. I was the new kid on the block, and Albert didn't want me to be on the records. Jackie fought them tooth and nail. Those records were done before the Charles Lloyd Quartet records, but Blue Note held them back.

I believe *Demon's Dance* had Larry Willis on it, along with Scotty Holt—a friend of mine from Chicago—and Woody Shaw. That was a pretty good vibe. We had the music and we did a rehearsal one day before we recorded, which we did in two days at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Pretty much a straight-ahead session.

I was highly influenced by Elvin Jones during that period. I was still striving to find my original voice, and you can hear the inklings of it a little bit. I think I was playing a blue Gretsch set. I don't remember what model; that's a long time ago!

That session was done before everybody wanted all the sounds isolated. We were all in the same room, with the drums facing the horns so we could see each other. It was intimate—a great, organic hookup.

Rudy was very efficient and fast. He knew the instrumentation and the music. We'd play through a tune once and he would have the levels set by the end. He was about getting out of the way of the music. That's why those Blue Note dates came out so good. Two or three takes, that's how all those records were done. Even some of the ECM records were done like that. You don't stay in the studio longer than you need to; you want to capture the spontaneity of the tune. I like my drumming on Charles Lloyd's *Dream Weaver* [1966] too.

MILES DAVIS

Live Evil (Columbia, 1970)

Miles was trying to do live what he did in the studio: keep it moving like a suite,

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end to end. The pieces were vamps, really, more like head tunes. Miles would just cue them by stating the melody. It was great; it was seamless. I like that kind of playing.

I was playing a Hollywood set. It had a floor tom with a mechanical pedal mecha-

nism. You tuned the drum the way you wanted it, and then when you pushed the pedal down it worked like a timpani. The pitch would go up from there. I used that effect on some things. But that set disappeared. It was stolen...sort of. I'm not going to go into that.

Chick Corea and I played double drums on some dates during that period with Miles, like at Shelly's Manne Hole in LA. Miles allowed that; he was great. We had some great times, Chick and I.

JOHN ABERCROMBIE
Timeless (ECM, 1974)

That was recorded at A&R Studios. Jan Hammer wrote several pieces, which we delved into, and the results were pretty nice. I thought it was very exciting. John Abercrombie and I had played together a lot. He'd worked in my band, so we already had a connection. But that was my first time playing with Jan. That was fun. Each person and each tune is different, so you react in real time. We all reacted to each other.

The tune "Lungs" was written for Don Alias. That was his nickname. There are also some beautiful ballads on that album.

Back then my brand of drums generally was Sonor. I sometimes played Hollywood, then some Italian-made Meazzi drums. After that it was just Sonor.

JACK DEJOHNETTE
Special Edition (ECM, 1979)

That was with David Murray, Arthur Blythe, and Peter Warren. David and Arthur were new on the scene. Peter and I had been playing together for some time. I wanted to write some music for quartet but give it a bigger sound through the use of my melodica ideas. I was using a Hohner electronic melodica, which was actually a monophonic synthesizer. I added the melodica as a third voicing, and when writing another voice for the bass, I realized I could get four voices going. I used that third voice on "Central Park West" and on my tune "Journey To The Twin Planet." I used it for the mysterious effects.

The album had some odd meters and three or four different sections. "Zoot Suite" was a tribute to Duke Ellington and a play on the title of a Broadway show called *Zoot Suit*. I wrote "One For Eric" for Eric Dolphy. I've written tributes to quite a few of my favorite musicians, including Monk, Ahmad Jamal, and Miles. We also did "India," a Coltrane tune that a lot of musicians didn't cover.

I was writing most of the tunes, so I had to think about how to set up everything on the drums, and also how to spotlight the players. Generally I get players who are on the same wavelength as I am. We feed each other, and we bring out the best from one another.

I was using a Sonor kit for that recording. I don't remember the model.

KEITH JARRETT TRIO
Still Live (ECM, 1986)

That is more or less a straight-ahead album. But that trio and its treatment of standards is pretty special—and really swinging. That recording captured us at a high point.

In that trio, we're contemporaries, and we have a chemistry that seems to really work. When Keith formed the trio, the idea was that we would play together until it didn't feel right. It keeps getting better and better, and here we are, twenty-three years later. It's still happening. Our interaction is pretty consistent, it's just grown. We're not playing all the time; I'm doing other projects. So when we come back together, we're pretty fresh. So it's always changing. There's a unique feeling between us, so we really like playing together. We expect the best to come out of us, and it usually does.

During the period when this album was made, I was with Paiste. Then I went with Sabian.

JACK DEJOHNETTE/ FODAY MUSA SUSO
Music From The Hearts Of The Masters (Kindred Rhythm/Golden Beams, 2005)

Foday is an African griot and kora player from Gambia. He's been in the States for twenty years. I first heard him on Herbie Hancock's record *The Village*. He did a duet with Herbie, who was playing a Yamaha synthesizer. They jammed on some of Foday's tunes. I really was impressed with what I heard.

Foday was playing with Philip Glass at one point. I went backstage and met him, and I invited him up to my house in Woodstock to record. We spent four days jamming in the studio, and we recorded the album.

Foday is what I would call a jazz kora player, in an African sense. We've toured together, and through the use of electronics and effects, he can create ostinatos that he plays over. He'll set up some loops, and I'll come up with rhythms for them. They'd be perfect for what he was doing; it was as if we'd been playing together for a long time. There was a magical connection. We have since added bassist Jerome Harris to the mix, and we plan to tour Europe in the fall.

TRIO BEYOND
Saudades (ECM, 2006)

That record is in part a tribute to Tony Williams, since the basis of the group was Tony Williams' Lifetime. If you heard Tony and that band, the kind of intensity that we play with here was one of their hallmarks. We are paying respect to that tradition and building on it. The creative level between Larry Goldings, John Scofield, and me is just so high that the music levitates us to that degree of intensity. We are compelled to play that way.

I wasn't literally thinking of Tony in my drumming. We're still ourselves, and that will come through, first and foremost. It's obvious that we are not a cover band. Still,

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MORE JACK—BY JACK

I like *Album Album* [ECM, 1984], especially my writing on there, such as "Ahmad The Terrible," which I wrote for Ahmad Jamal. That was ensemble writing, which was fun to do for that band.

I like *Irresistible Forces* [MCA, 1987] and *Earthwalk* [1991, Blue Note] a lot. I was playing a Sonor white and black kit. Mick Goodrick is a phenomenal player and improviser, as are Gary Thomas and Greg Osby. These are players who are thinking outside the box. I was looking for something different, not the status quo. Nana Vasconcelos was involved, too. Writing for that group involved more electronic drum machines and keyboards. I liked that direction.

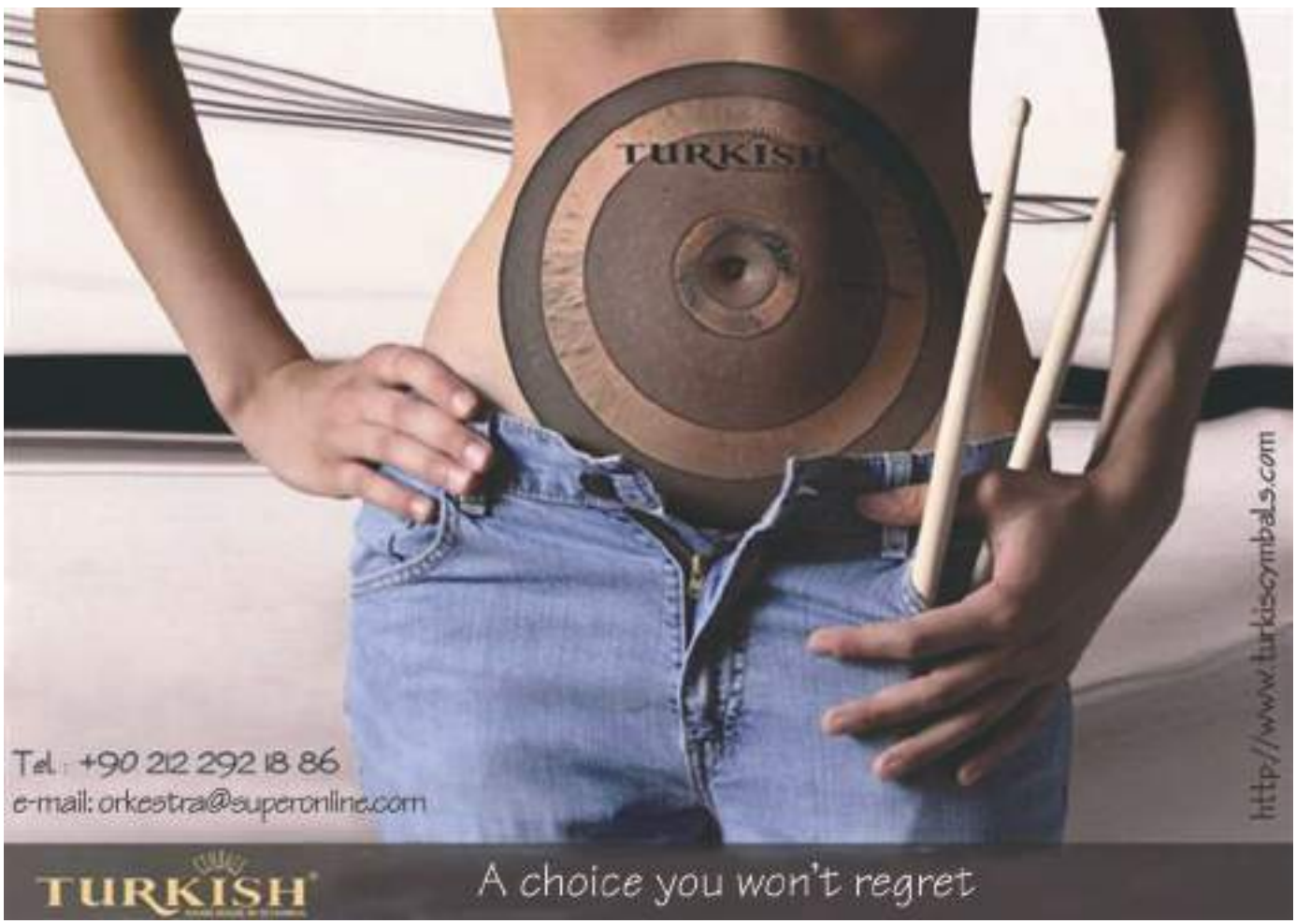
I did *Extra Special Edition* [Blue Note, 1994] with Bobby McFerrin. It was "extra special" because we had guitarist Marvin Sewell as well as Bobby.

I had a great group on *Oneness* [ECM, 1996], which included Don Alias and Michael Cain. Don really played great. He was such an incredible player because he knew how to play *with* drums; he had a drumset feel on congas. Because of that, he was privy to playing with all the great drummers—like Elvin and Tony—as well as with me. •

we all felt that Tony made a tremendously innovative contribution to playing the drums—and that he has been and still is overlooked. You don't hear him talked about in the media, generally. I'm just talking about the general vibe, as compared to some other drummers. So this recording is a musical tribute to Tony as a composer, as an ambassador, and as a great drummer.

I pick certain musicians to play with because I know it's going to click. As the trio has developed, our scope has broadened to include tributes to other musicians: Elvin Jones, John McLaughlin, Larry Young, Big Nick Nicholas, and Coltrane. We've recorded some other tunes by Wayne Shorter—like "Fall"—and some other Tony pieces too. We also did "Spectrum," "Seven Steps To Heaven," and some originals. We want to raise the level of the music to its optimum energy level.

To hear some of Jack DeJohnette's recordings, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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Brian Tichy

A Perfect Place To Be Loud

Story by Waleed Rashidi
Photos by Alex Solca

Brian Tichy doesn't mind being in the spotlight, whether it's behind the kit onstage with Billy Idol, or fronting his own rock band, Ball, with whom he sings and plays guitar. But when it comes to his own rehearsal and recording studio, Brian's location couldn't be any more low-key.

Tichy's pad of practice and production, jokingly dubbed What Vince, Where? Studios, is a simple, no-frills room in a private, non-descript rehearsal complex situated in a commercial district of North Hollywood. It may be the opposite of his outgoing, electric, and engaging personality, but the way Tichy explains it, the room appears to be quite the match.

Tichy originally hails from New Jersey. He moved to Los Angeles in 1994 during his stint in the band Pride And Glory. Among the artists he's drummed for since establishing himself as a top-notch journeyman are Foreigner and Ozzy Osbourne. At the end of 2003, he established his own jam spot, when he finally got tired of the hassles involved with conducting rehearsals in his garage. "You've got to have a place to be loud," he insists, "a place to be able to scream and smash cymbals and snares."

Brian's all-hours location is also situated in a more ideal geographical spot than his residence, particularly when it comes to working with Idol. "The best thing about this location is that it's in North Hollywood, so it's central to just about everybody I work with," the drummer explains. "Billy Idol lives in the Hollywood Hills, so he's not even ten minutes away from here."

What Vince, Where? Studios also doubles as Tichy's classroom (for giving lessons) and as a recording studio, where the multi-instrumentalist has been known to lay down tracks on the drums, bass, guitar, and vocals both for pre-production and final recordings.

"When you have some awesome Tama drums, a set of Octobans, a skull shaker, Pro Tools, a bunch of guitars, and a P.A.," says Tichy, "what else do you need? That's everything right there."

The recordings Tichy has produced in the room are of surprisingly sharp fidelity, given the size of the room and the "project studio" aesthetic to the interior. "If you walked in this room," Brian says, "and later heard the drum sound we got in here, you'd go, 'That's not from this room.'

"It's just about experimentation," Tichy figures. "You can be in the best studio in the world, and it doesn't mean that the drums are going to be killer-sounding. It's how you tune 'em, how you hit 'em, how they're recorded, what the engineer did, all the way to what the producer's ears hear."

Tichy says that he's been able to wrangle a wide variety of drum sounds from the room, usually from the same Tama Superstar kit he has set up right next to his Pro Tools rig.

"Sometimes I'll totally de-tune and deaden the drums, make it full-on Don Henley or Mick Fleetwood or whatever. And then sometimes it's wide-open and loud, and we'll put a big, double-headed, ringing John Bonham bass drum in here. It's how you use compression and what combination of mics you use."

Tichy has learned the room quite well in the time he's been there. In fact, if he's not on tour (he spent several months on the road with Idol in 2005) or caring for his twin three-year-old girls, Tichy says he can easily clock in sixty hours in a week.

Brian has also penned and recorded a number of songs that have appeared on television and movie soundtracks, such as *CSI, Law And Order: SVU*, and *One Tree Hill*. All these tracks were produced in his studio, with Tichy on all instruments.

Is there anything Brian would like to change in his place? Well, it gets a bit stuffy from time to time, and he says he'd like a bit more isolation and soundproofing. "And if it was twice the size, and there was a separate control room, that would be killer," Tichy agrees. "But everything I need to practice, create, rehearse, or whatever is in here, and it's all not more than two feet away from me. Any time I need to write with Billy, rehearse with the band, or track a pretty damned good sounding demo—it's all here!"

Gear Box

Drums: Tama Superstar, including a 22" kick drum, a 14" rack tom, and 16" and 18" floor toms. His Tama snares are $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 and 4x14 brass models with brushed nickel plating. Additional snares include a Leedy maple-shell, a DW maple, a Ludwig bronze shell, a Ludwig Acrolite, and a Drum Paradise "Hitmaker."

Cymbals: Zildjian, various models and sizes.

Percussion: Tama Octobans, Meinl mini congas.

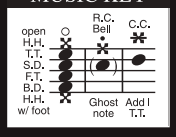
Wolfmother's

Myles Heskett

by Ed Breckenfeld

Justin Borucki

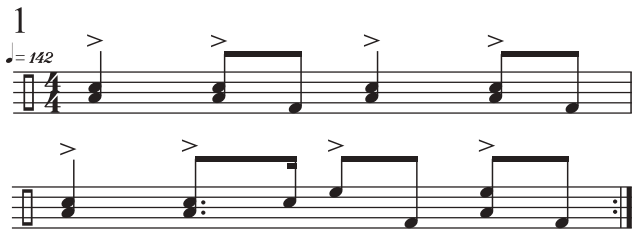
MUSIC KEY



The smash debut from Australian power trio Wolfmother is an homage to early-'70s British rock. Combine Robert Plant–style vocal imagery with Deep Purple–tinged guitar and organ riffs, wrap it in a vintage Frank Frazetta album cover, and you've got a young band that wears its influences like a badge of honor. For his part, drummer Myles Heskett brings the thunder from down under, bashing through these tracks with the straightforward approach of a bygone era. Here's a smattering of his best drum patterns from the album.

"Dimension"

The disc opens with Heskett's quarter-note snare/floor tom groove that deftly bolsters the song's guitar riff without adding clutter. (0:03)

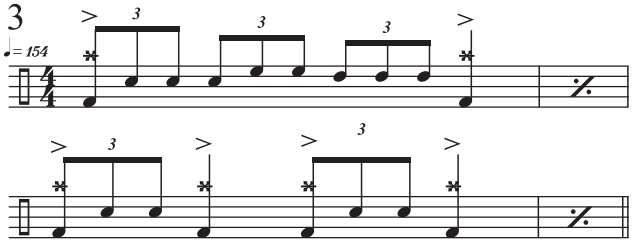


"White Unicorn"

Myles' drum part for the instrumental bridge of this tune is right out of the John Bonham school of sweeping 16th note–triplet fills. The individual triplets in the first and third measures could be played with various stickings: RLRL (right-hand lead into a left-hand crash), LRLR (left-hand lead into a right-hand crash), or RLLR (which allows the right hand to start the rhythm and hit the crash). (2:42)

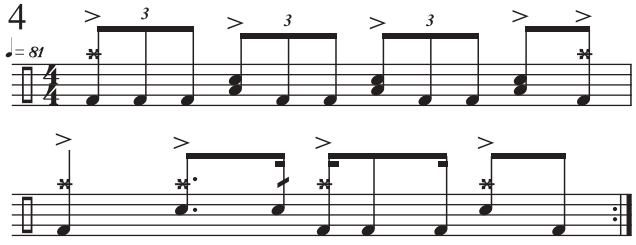
"Woman"

The middle section of this hit single features a couple of triplet riffs played by the whole band. Heskett uses his snare and toms to match the downward melodic movement of the first riff, followed by crash and snare combinations to support the second part. (1:24)



"Apple Tree"

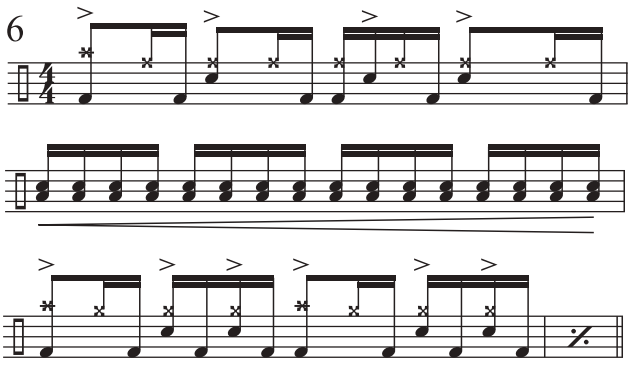
Wolfmother has a knack for coming up with interesting instrumental passages. This speedy track shifts to a halftime feel, where Myles creates a pattern that switches between triplets and a heavy syncopated groove. (1:02)



"Colossal"

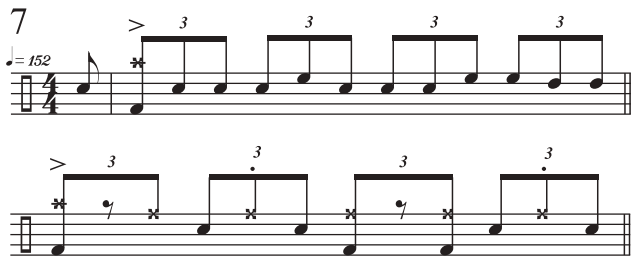
In Heskett's two-measure beat for the verse of this plodding track, the two snare hits on the last beat of the second measure act like a fill, pumping a little energy into the end of the pattern. (0:23)

For the chorus, Myles expands on the syncopation of his verse groove and then uses a 16th-note crescendo to bring the band back to the intro riff. Notice the return of the two-note snare pattern in measure 3. This snare part becomes one of the motifs in the song. (1:00)



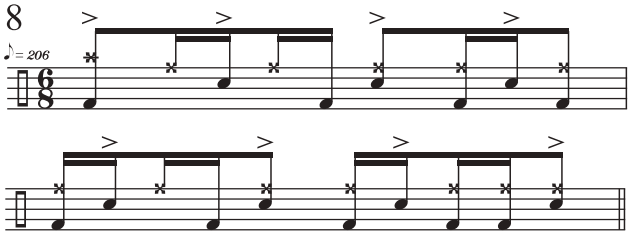
"Mind's Eye"

The slow, moody feel of this tune gives way to an organ-led double-time shuffle, with Heskett's well-placed bell accents providing rhythmic interest. (3:39)



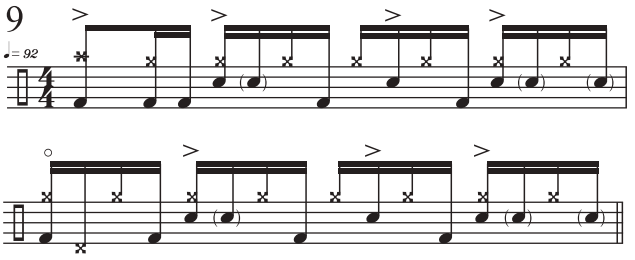
"Witchcraft"

Myles shows off his versatility as the band takes a departure into 6/8 on this track. This syncopated groove is slightly swung, adding a jazzy element to the album. (0:07)

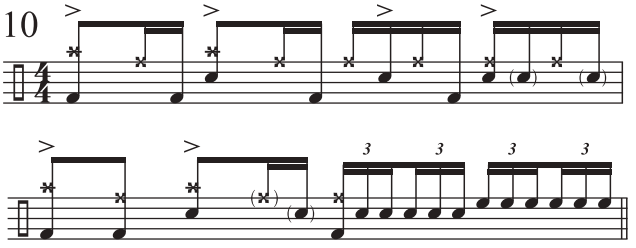


"Love Train"

Next, Wolfmother tries their hand at a mid-tempo '70s funk groove. Heskett hits all the right marks with his offbeat snare and kicks, ghost notes, and open hi-hat accents. (0:10)



During the chorus, Myles' 16th note–triplet fills add to the retro flavor of the song. (0:42)



You can contact **Ed Breckenfeld** through his Web site: www.edbreckenfeld.com.

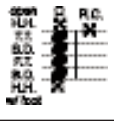
Style & Analysis

Tony Williams

Part 2: Metric Modulation

by Jeremy Brown

MUSIC KEY



With The Miles Davis Quintet, jazz great Tony Williams developed an entirely new approach to rhythm. During any tune, his rhythmic experiments might lead the band from a medium swing feel into a straight-8th groove (as in "All Of You" from Miles Davis's *Four And More*), or he might stretch a three- or five-beat rhythm over several measures of 4/4. On many occasions, Tony's polyrhythmic concepts went so far that he took the band into a totally new tempo—a phenomenon called metric modulation.

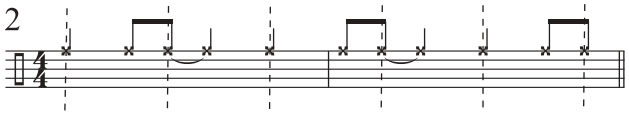
"Joshua"

Metric modulation occurs when subdivisions of the original pulse are grouped in a way that creates a new tempo (For example, 16th notes grouped in threes, or 8th-note triplets grouped in fours). Tony played a subtle metric modulation on "Joshua" from *Miles Davis In Europe*. This example is from one of Tony's earliest recordings with the band, and it demonstrates how he would spread a basic jazz ride pattern over several measures. (2:25)

1

The underlying pulse in Example 1 is the dotted quarter note. Tony spreads the ride pattern over three 8th notes—instead of three 8th-note triplets—and crosses the barlines.

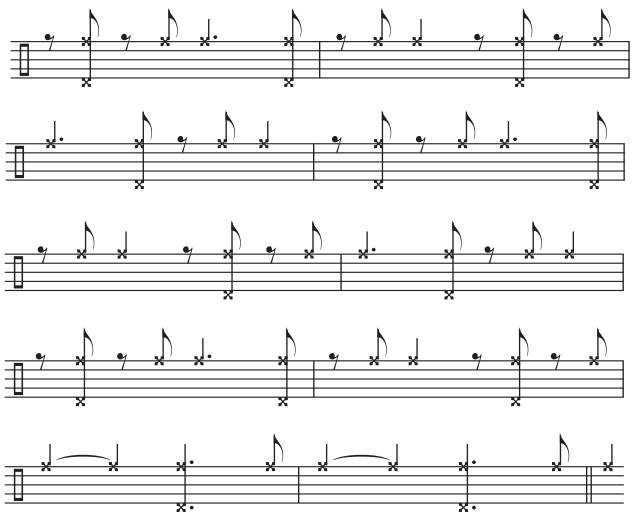
2



"If I Were A Bell"

The quintet's 1965 recordings at the Plugged Nickel in Chicago, Illinois capture Tony and his rhythm-section mates experimenting with metric modulation more than on any other discs. On the second performance of "If I Were A Bell," Tony begins a metric modulation by stretching the triplet subdivision of the conventional ride pattern over three 8th notes (as in Example 2). After ten measures, he stretches the ride pattern even further—over four 8th notes—bringing the tempo to half time. (11:58)

3

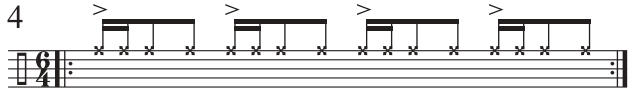


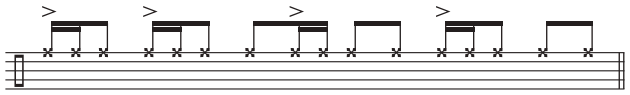
"Footprints"

The Quintet recorded *Miles Smiles* less than one year after their 1965 Plugged Nickel engagement. This album features a version of Wayne Shorter's classic tune "Footprints" that showcases Tony's adventurous experiments in metric modulation. This composition is based on a six-beat bass line. Tony combines a slightly swung 8th-note groove on the ride cymbal with a tom-tom pattern reminiscent of Art Blakey's Latin beats on recordings from the 1950s and early '60s. (Check out "Nica's Dream" from Blakey's album *The Jazz Messengers* for an example.)

In the third bar of the melody, Tony plays 16th-note rhythms on the ride cymbal, hinting at a 6/4 double-time swing feel. Later in the track, he floats the ride rhythm to the hi-hat, creating interesting open/closed articulations. (0:24)

4





A true metric modulation occurs during the second chorus of the melody. In measures 9 and 10 of the form, Tony and bassist Ron Carter launch into double time, playing twelve pulses in each measure. For the rest of the tune, Tony and Ron modulate to a new time-feel when they arrive at this point in the form.

During the second chorus of Miles' trumpet solo, Ron leads Tony into a brief modulation to 4/4, with the dotted quarter note becoming the pulse. (The bass part is notated on the top staffs of Examples 5 and 6.) (1:51)

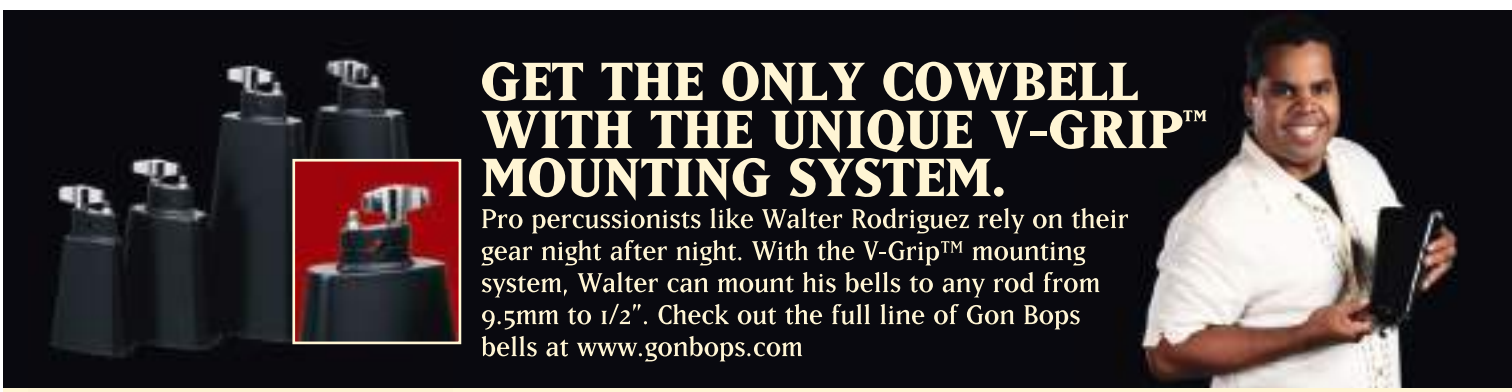
5

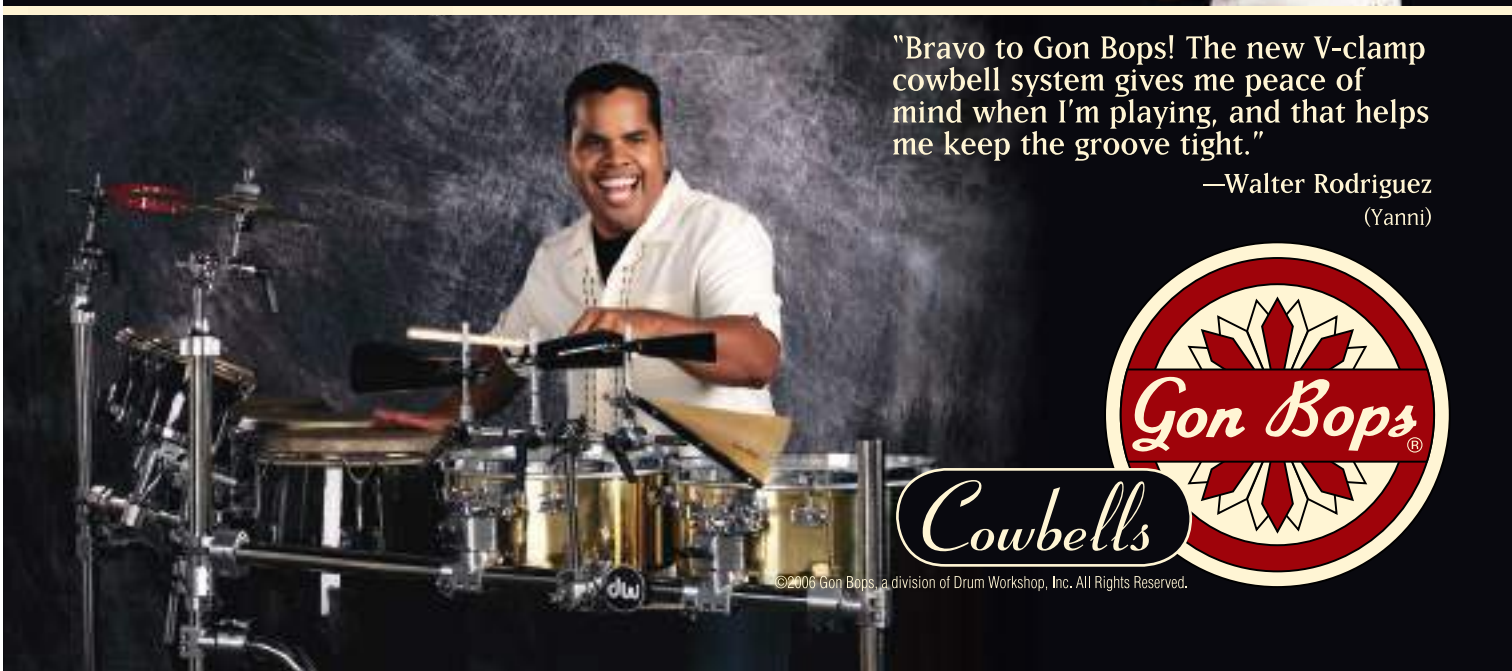
In the next chorus, Tony modulates to a double-time Blakey-inspired tom beat (Measure 3) over the dotted quarter–note pulse in measures 1–2. Now he's superimposing eight beats over the original 6/4 time signature. Carter emphasizes the eight-against-six polyrhythm by keeping his bass line in six. (2:15)

6

The Quintet's rhythmic experiments in "Footprints" and in other recordings are an audio textbook for metric modulation. Tony's rhythmic feats wouldn't have been as effective without the creative minds and solid sense of time of the other members of the quintet. His rhythmic concepts later influenced great jazz drummers like Jeff "Tain" Watts (check out Wynton Marsalis's *Standard Time, Vol. I*) and Billy Kilson (on The Dave Holland Quintet's *Extended Play: Live At Birdland*).

In the final part of this series, we'll look at another aspect of Tony's drumming that defies expectations—dynamics.

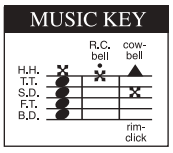




More Street Beats

A Modern Approach To Second-Line Rhythms

by Stanton Moore



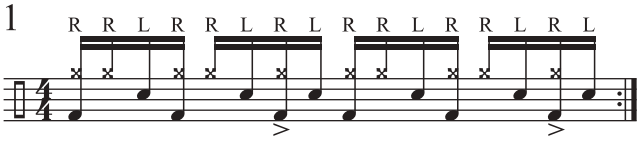
In my last article (March '06), we talked about the history and origins of the traditional approach to New Orleans second-line drumming. This time, I'd like to discuss a more modern way to play these rhythms.

The modern approach that we're examining here was pioneered by my teacher Johnny Vidacovich. The ideas are based on simple sticking combinations that can be used in different ways. By adding accents and moving the patterns around the kit, you'll find a plethora of different grooves and fills. The possibilities are infinite, limited only by your imagination.

RRLR-RLRL

This first sticking opened many doors for me. What's so special about this one is that the right hand plays with the right foot. Subsequently, when you start to experiment with different variations, the right hand can follow the bass drum. Let's check out the sticking with the right hand on the hi-hat and the left on the snare.

1



If you put both hands on the snare, you get a groove that works great as a street beat/second-line groove. Notice that this groove sits on the "three" side of the clave. Also, check out the buzzes at the end of the measure.

2

Around The Kit

By moving your hands around the different voices in the kit, you'll get different grooves from this same sticking. Example 3 works well as a Latin-jazz groove. You could use it on standards like "Caravan," "A Night In Tunisia," or any number of Latin-jazz tunes where the bass player is laying down a mambo-type bass line.

3

Here's one that works great as a Mardi Gras Indian groove. It sounds really cool if you play it with a Handbourine or a Jingle Stick in the right hand.

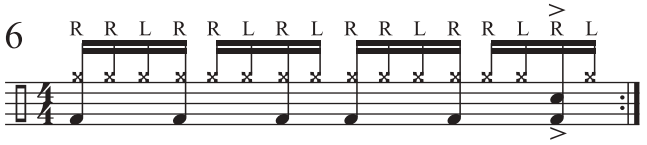
4

This one works great in a funk, brass band, or Mardi Gras Indian situation.

5

Here are some more voicings to try.

6



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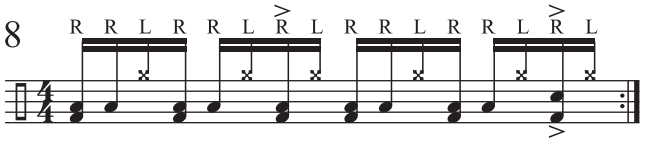

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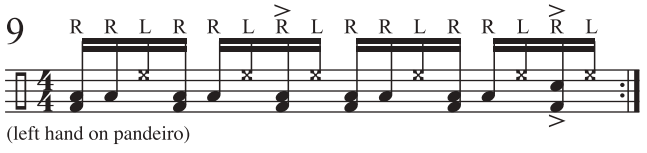


(left hand on pandeiro)

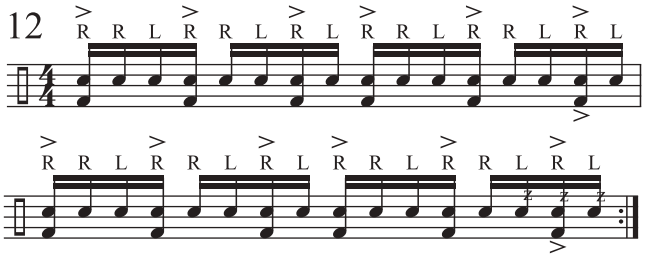
10

This one works great on Sonny Rollins' classic tune "St. Thomas."

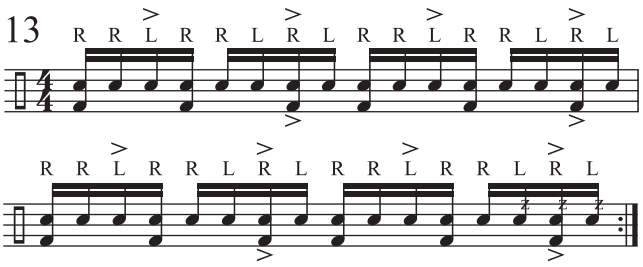
11

Adding Accents

Now let's examine some of the possibilities when we change the accents. This first one outlines the "three" side of the clave. It can be used for a groove like what Zigaboo Modeliste used on The Meters' famous tune "Hey Pocky-A-Way."



This next one is a train beat that will work great as a Cajun or New Orleans shuffle.

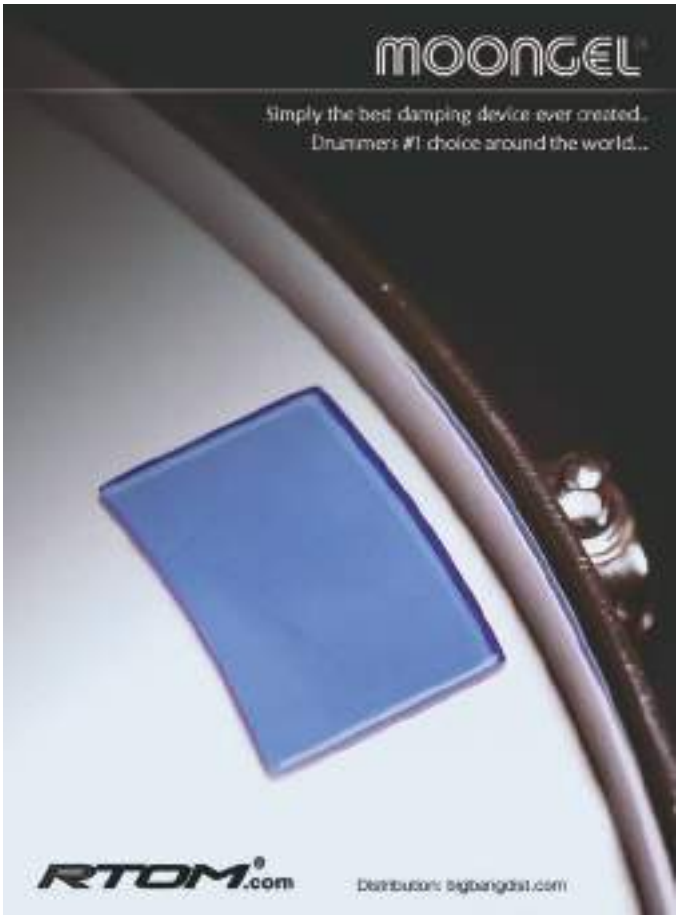


Here's one I came up with that uses the traditional New Orleans second-line accents.

All of these grooves will work well together. You could use them for different sections of a tune or as texture changes within a solo. Using just one sticking, you could play the "A" section of a tune with one groove, change to another pattern for the bridge, and use different variations behind the soloists. You should also try using this sticking in different styles of music, and voice it around the toms for fills. Once you get comfortable with the pattern, experiment and come up with your own variations. You may be surprised at what you discover.

Dwight Marshall

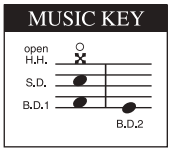
New Orleans musician **Stanton Moore** is the drummer in the popular funk band Galactic. This article is excerpted from Stanton's book/CD, *Take It To The Street*, published by Carl Fischer Music. Used with permission.



Speaking With Your Feet

Incorporating Drags, Triplets, And Broken 16ths

by John Macaluso



Unless you're walking into a heavy metal session, entering the studio with two bass drums can spark looks of horror from the songwriter, not to mention the producer. Even hooking up a double pedal can trigger fears that the song will be trampled by the infamous "dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga" metal beat.

In reality, double bass drumming can be used as a great rhythmic tool in many styles of music. Of course, it's great for power playing, because it can really drive a song. But it can also be very musical—if employed tastefully. Effective double bass drumming can add excitement to a song's chorus, enhance a verse groove by following a guitar riff, or provide for that one magical fill. It's all in how you apply it. When I wanted to take my double bass playing to a new level, I formed my own band, ARK, and began experimenting. Many of the ideas I came up with are based on the concepts I learned from my friend and mentor Joe Franco, author of the classic text *Double Bass Drumming*. In his method, you begin with straight 16th-note patterns and gradually take notes away.

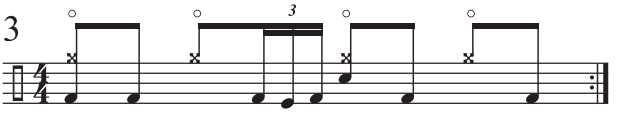
For my system, I took many of Joe's broken double bass patterns and enhanced them by adding drags and triplets. Drags are two 32nd notes connected to one 16th note. A triplet is a group of three notes played evenly in the space normally occupied by two.

As you're working through these examples, keep in mind that the primary foot plays the downbeats and the secondary foot plays the offbeats. If you stick to that rule, you should have no problems figuring out how to play any rhythm you're hearing in your head.

Here are two double bass patterns that use drags.

The next example has a half-time feel and uses a 16th-note

triplet in the feet. The triplet is placed after the second hi-hat beat (on the "&" of 2). Triplets sound best when they're not rushed. So stretch the space between the three notes to fatten the groove.



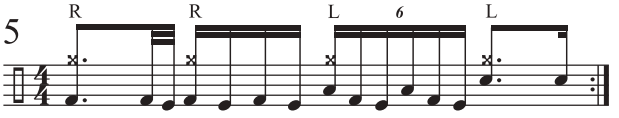
Here's another half-time example. This one feels better when played faster and with some edge. The syncopated snare rhythm at the end of the measure gives this pattern an offbeat character.

You can also add power to your sound by using the floor tom

for a triple-bass effect. To the listener, this sounds complex. But it's actually easy to do and can be played at high speeds. For the best results, detune your floor tom until you get as close to the tone of a bass drum as possible.

In Example 5, the floor tom is played on beat 3 within a 16th-note triplet figure. This pattern is a bit tricky because the hi-hat hand switches from the right to the left halfway through the measure.

Even when you're away from your drumset, you can continue



to build your double bass chops by using an exercise I call "Agony Of The Feet." While seated and keeping your heel on the ground, tap your foot using quick, full strokes. After one minute, the front of your leg should start to burn. Try to go for five minutes, twice a day, working one foot at a time.

John Macaluso has recorded and toured with ARK, Yngwie Malmsteen, James LaBrie, TNT, Starbreaker, Powermad, George Lynch, and KRS-ONE. For more on John, visit www.johnmacaluso.com.

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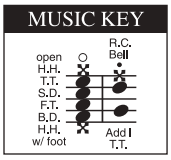
Open-Handed Drumming

How To Get Started

by Ed Breckenfeld

One of the originators of open-handed drumming, Billy Cobham

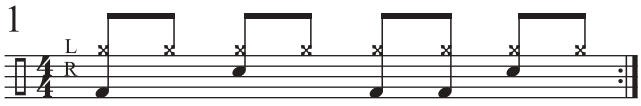


The idea of open-handed drumming (playing the hi-hat with the hand closest to it rather than crossing over with the hand that's farther away) can be intimidating. Many drummers have tried it once or twice, ran into problems, and gave up. While it may seem like you'd have to be Billy Cobham or Simon Phillips to pull it off, there are steps that any drummer can take to work open-handed playing into his or her repertoire.

The advantages of open-handed drumming go far beyond just looking cool. The term "open handed" is a perfect description, as the rest of the drumset is opened up when your hi-hat hand no longer has to cross over your snare. Your snare hand is free to reach around the kit, allowing you to more easily incorporate toms and cymbals into your grooves.

The first step is to try playing simple beats with an open-handed sticking. For right-handed players, use the left hand on the hi-hat. (Left-handed drummers should reverse the stickings.) The initial challenge is to get your bass drum to line up consistently with your left hand. Try playing Examples 1–4 until the connections are solid and the beat flows comfortably. Then try some of your favorite bass drum parts, keeping the snare on beats 2 and 4.

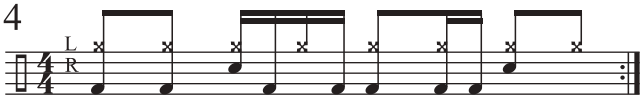
1



2

3

4



Though the previous patterns become progressively more challenging, you'll find that you can match up your right foot and left hand with a little perseverance. A much larger problem arises when you try to drop in offbeats with the right hand on the snare, as in Example 5.

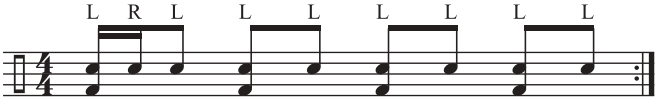
5

Placing the right hand on the offbeats can easily mess up the connection between the bass drum and hi-hat. To address this problem, find a snare drum method book with a section of 16th-note and 8th-note combinations. A perfect example would be pages 22–28 of Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation*. Play all of the exercises on those pages with left-hand strokes on the downbeats and right-hand strokes on the "e's" and "ah's." Also include a quarter-note bass drum part to help solidify the match-up between the right foot and left hand. Here are some exercises taken from *Syncopation*.

Page 22, #1

Page 23, #15

Page 24, #1



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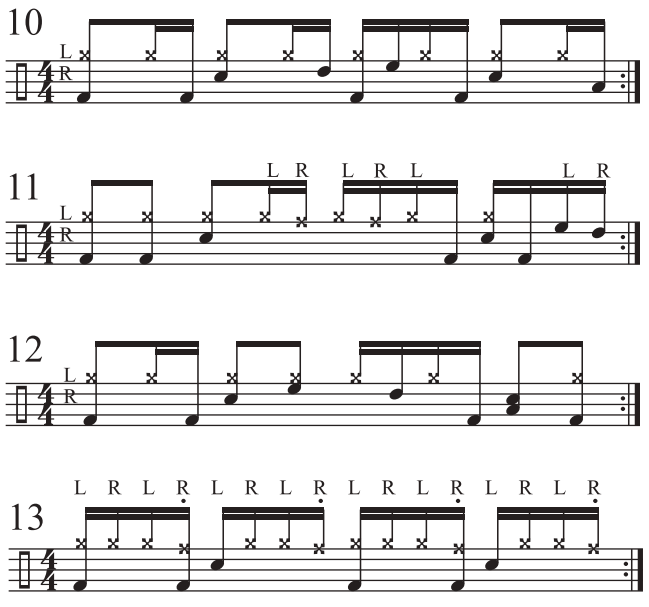
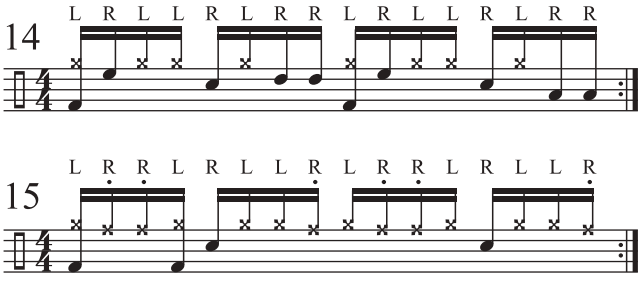
Drilling these types of exercises will strengthen your left hand's timekeeping ability. They should also help break down your right hand's "need to lead," while also getting it used to a new role as offbeat support. Once you've practiced through these exercises, return to patterns like Example 5 and tackle the offbeats. Here are a few more challenging examples.

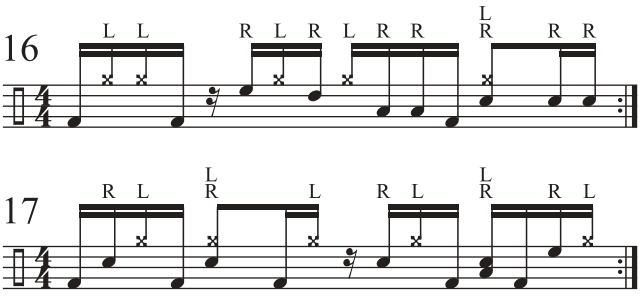
After you've mastered Examples 5–9, you're ready to delve into the rest of the kit with the right stick. The following ideas are just a starting point for your own explorations.



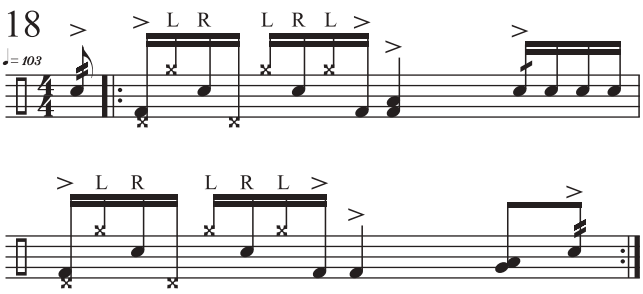
Other sticking patterns can provide ideas for open-handed beats. For example, the familiar paradiddle can be easily reversed and used to create some cool grooves.



Linear-style patterns can also lead to great beats in the open-handed concept. The linear style is perfect for left-hand hi-hat work, since neither hand plays a traditional timekeeping role.



Here's one of the finest examples of a linear open-handed groove. This is Steve Gadd's amazing beat from Paul Simon's classic "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover."



Open-handed playing is a great way to take you out of the box and spark some new ideas. Go for it, and you may never look back!

Ed Breckenfeld is a long-time Chicago-area drummer and drum instructor who records and performs with various Midwestern artists including The Insiders, The Cathy Richardson Band, and Jim Peterik's World Stage. Ed can be reached through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.

Working With A Metronome

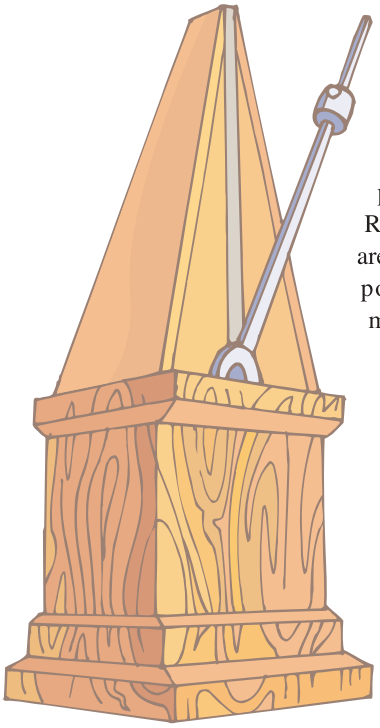
8 Ways To Dramatically Improve Your Time

by Paul Wells

Metronomes, click tracks, drum machines, and sequencers are everywhere. From the practice room, to the arena stage, to the recording studio, drummers of all levels and styles are finding themselves working with some kind of electronic timekeeper.

In the early days of *Modern Drummer*, we would read stories of drummers griping about having to play with a click, worried that it would make them sound robotic and unmusical. These days, many drummers are embracing the metronome as a way to improve their consistency and feel. Plenty of drummers are finding themselves playing along to sequencers and backing tracks on gigs. In fact, many bands are playing along to a click during live shows, simply for the sake of tempo consistency.

In this article, we'll look at several techniques designed to help you get the most out of practicing with a metronome. We'll also explore some practical applications beyond the woodshed where you may want to try employing a click track.



First off, make sure you have a high-quality, modern metronome. If you're only working on a practice pad, then any basic model will work. However, if you plan to use it with a drumset, you'll need something with a proper stereo headphone output. Tama's Rhythm Watch and Yamaha's Clickstation are high-quality tools designed for this purpose. You can also try using a drum machine.

Make sure you have a pair of professional-quality, studio headphones. I recommend wearing earplugs when using headphones. In order to hear the high-pitched click over your drums, you'll need to boost the volume up to dangerous levels. In-ear monitors are a great compromise, and there are now many inexpensive models to choose from.

Now that we've got the right tools, let's get to work.

1 Pick a tempo at random. Press start on the metronome. Listen for exactly one measure (four clicks if you're practicing 4/4), then start playing a groove. Try to really listen closely and pay attention to the one-bar count off. When you start playing, try to lock in with the tempo immediately. Listen to how your kick, snare, hi-hats, etc. are lining up with the timing of the click. This will help you nail a tempo on a gig where someone other than yourself is providing the count-off, especially on an unfamiliar tune.

2 Pick a tempo. Practice this tempo for five minutes or more. Play some grooves and fills, maybe even try some soloing. After five minutes, stop playing and immediately change the metronome's tempo two or three clicks slower. Now try playing something similar to what you were doing before. You'll probably want to speed up. Also try this exercise with the tempo slightly faster than the original. This can help you learn to discern the difference between minute tempo changes.

3 Instead of practicing with a quarter-note click, try half notes or whole notes. If you have a drum machine, you can go so far as to program one click every two measures, four measures, or more.

4 Try practicing with a metronome clicking only on beat 2 of each measure. Then try beat 3, beat 4, the & of 1, the & of 2, etc. Make this as difficult as you dare.

5 Pick a tempo you feel comfortable with and play along with the click for a few bars, let's say eight for this example. Then turn off the click while still

playing. Play for another eight bars, then turn the click back on while still playing. See if you have to "adjust" back to the starting tempo. This exercise is easier if you have a start/stop pedal or footswitch for your metronome.

6 Set the click to a tempo you're comfortable playing, say, 115 bpm. Play along for a few minutes, then change the click to a different, unrelated tempo, perhaps 136 bpm. Try to continue to play the original tempo (115) while listening to the new tempo (136). This is *very* hard. It may help if you record yourself to see how well you're keeping "your" tempo. This exercise can help you keep steady time while playing with musicians who have bad time.

7 Try using a click track while playing with a band. I strongly recommend trying this in rehearsals first since it takes a lot of getting used to. Pay attention to your time when switching between sections of a song. It is common for drummers to "feel" the chorus of a song at a faster or slower tempo than the verse. You may also discover certain fills that you tend to rush or drag.

8 When you feel comfortable enough in rehearsals, try playing along with the metronome during a gig. This takes a lot of preparation to pull off comfortably. Before the gig, make sure that you've kept an accurate list of the tempos for each song. I always write the tempos on my set list, so they're handy. Some metronomes can memorize a "chain" of pre-programmed tempos.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, make sure you can properly monitor your click, preferably with in-ear monitors. Record your gigs and listen to see if the tempos feel good to you. Compare with gig tapes from gigs with no click. The idea here is to achieve consistency with your tempos. No matter how adrenalized or how fatigued you feel, the tempos will never be too fast or too slow.

Paul Wells is a busy drummer based in the NY/NJ/PA area. He is currently a member of the band Spiraling and has performed with Joe Williams, Marion Raven, Norman Simmons, Glen Burtnik, Dave Valentin, Rufus Reid, and The Duke Ellington Legacy, among others. Paul can be reached at his Web site, www.paulwells.info.

Mike Watt

Pouncing On Opportunities

by Adam Budofsky

Mike Watt is a flesh-and-blood superhero to anyone who's followed the do-it-yourself alternative music scene over the past twenty-five years—such as this month's cover star, Stephen Perkins, who's Watt's rhythm mate in the group Banyan. As the spiel-spewing rhythmic force behind the legendary San Pedro, California band The Minutemen, Watt, along with drummer George Hurley and late guitarist/singer D. Boon, proved that punk rock could be so much more than...well...than anyone at the time ever imagined.

Incorporating elements of jazz, funk, avant-garde, and even (gasp!) classic rock, The Minutemen produced a treasure trove of recordings that walked boldly through the doors blown open by the punk revolution. Shocking in their passion, invention, and scope, and impossible to overestimate in terms of influence, The Minutemen's songs are revered by musicians who came of age in the early '80s.

Following the death of D. Boon in 1985, Watt and Hurley continued The Minutemen's adventurous ways in the band fIREHOSE. Watt went on to work with Sonic Youth, J. Mascis, Porno For Pyros, and Iggy & The Stooges, and put out his own albums as a leader, including the popular alternative all-star double disc Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?

Recently Watt re-joined Hurley yet again, in the poetic groove-punk collective Unknown Instructors. He's also continued working with Banyan, whose recent release, Live At Perkins' Palace, showcases both musicians' deep, worldly rhythmic communications.

MD engaged in some communi-cations of our own with the estimable four-stringer, initially for the purpose of getting a quote for the introductory pages of The Drummer, MD's recently released coffee-table book. We only needed a sentence or two, but Mike was so thoughtful and generous with his time, we kept the tape rolling, figuring we'd decide what to do with all this good stuff later. Well, "later" is now….

MD: The first Unknown Instructors album was largely improvised, right?

Mike: It was *totally* improvised. A poet from Toledo, Ohio named Dan Maguire put the project together. He used to come to fIREHOSE gigs, that's how he met me and Georgie. Guitarist Joe Baiza of Saccharine Trust goes way back with us. But Dan thought up this idea: "Hey, why don't you guys just jam and I'll do poems over it?"

MD: How do you find that sort of situation—exciting, nerve-racking, both…?

Mike: It's much different from the other thing, where you organize pieces and practice them. But, you know, to keep learning you've got to keep putting yourself in challenging situations. You stop learning, you stop living.

MD: What kind of things did you find that you had to focus on in an improvising situation?

Mike: Well, anytime with jamming—I also have this thing with Stephen Perkins called Banyan where we're making stuff up at the moment—but what I've learned is you've *got* to listen, because you don't know where it's going—unless you want to strong-arm it. But to me, any time you've got an ensemble, the key is to make it an interesting conversation. But jamming versus working with songs—they're just different perspectives on the same thing. We're trying to make these machines laugh and cry.

MD: Does the drummer have a unique role?

Mike: This whole hierarchy of drummers being "backup musicians"…there's been this kind of conventional wisdom, "He's just some idiot backup guy." To me, everybody involved goes into the whole deal. Nature favors some frequencies over oth-

Brothers In Arms

Drummers Mike Watt Has Worked With

George Hurley
Stephen Perkins
Dave Grohl
Mike D
John Wicks
Ron Asheton
John Molo
Raul Morales
Steve Shelley
George Berz
Bob Lee
Brock Avery
Richie West
Michael Preussner
Jerry Trebotic

ers in some ways, but to make a full sound you need all the parts.

Actually, we're all drummers. I'm working those strings with my right hand, and I'm kind of playing a little drum part. The rhythm is involved with everything. The drums are the great rhythmic ancestor. I don't know how it came about, maybe it was ancient people dancing, and their feet pounding the ground acted as the first drum.

MD: You said that in a way all instrumentalists are drummers. But we've all heard some musicians say things like, "The drummer is responsible for the time, and everyone leans on him." Others feel that every player is responsible for the time, that it shouldn't just be the drummer's job.

Mike: And you know what, sometimes it works if the drummer ain't got such good time, like with The Who. John Entwhistle on bass had this incredible time, and that kind of freed up Keith Moon to just let the freak flag fly. I don't think the guy ever used a hi-hat until the later stuff. And you needed that, it was kinetic. So whatever the situation calls for.... The whole idea of roles, this is kind of what attracted me to the punk thing. These people didn't even know how to play, which threw things out of kilter in terms of the role-playing, the hierarchies. Bass was traditionally the place you put the lame guys. But all of a sudden when you had *all* lame guys, Bass Guy got all equal.

A journalist once interviewed John Coltrane and asked him, "What are you listening to when you are soloing?" He said, "I'm listening to the bass." That was such a great thing to hear, because growing up it was like, This is where you put the retarded friend—right field. Now, yeah, acoustically we do have kind of a narrow part of the sound, and as far as the drummer goes, I have to admit that I listen to the kick drum first, because that's the note I share.

MD: In The Minutemen you all seemed to really enjoy creating an unending variety of musical worlds. It was as if you would agree on a certain direction, a certain feel or whatever, and then do whatever was needed to make that thing happen. There was very little sense of, "This is where the B section has to go like this...."

Multi-Tasking

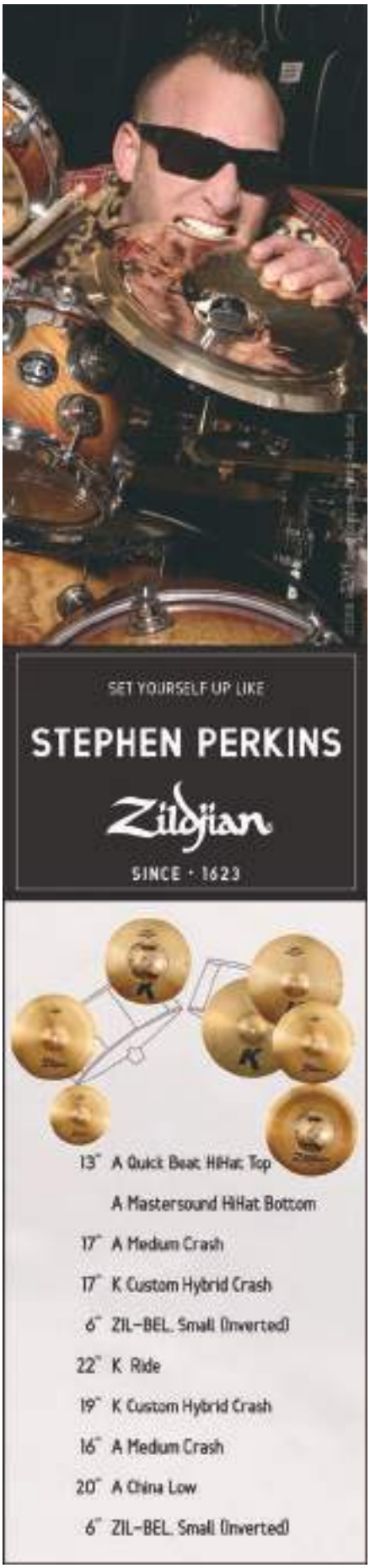
Mike Watt's double-album solo debut was an alternative all-star event—and a gold-mine of powerful drumming.

Mike Watt's major-label solo debut remains a wonderful oddity of modern music. Populated by members of Sonic Youth, Pearl Jam, The Lemonheads, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Jane's Addiction, Nirvana, The Meat Puppets, and Dinosaur Jr., among other alternative-rock institutions, the album unsurprisingly features some awesome and varied drumming.

Lead-off track "Big Train" kicks things off with a heavy push worthy of its title, dominated by a typically swashbuckling **Dave Grohl** performance.

Elsewhere, Nels Cline's **Michael Preussner** takes a skittery, prodding approach, nudging several tracks toward their prescribed end points. And sax-y workout "E-Ticket Ride" got some airplay thanks in no small part to the split drumming duties of this month's cover star, **Stephen Perkins**, and Bruce Hornsby's **John Molo**.

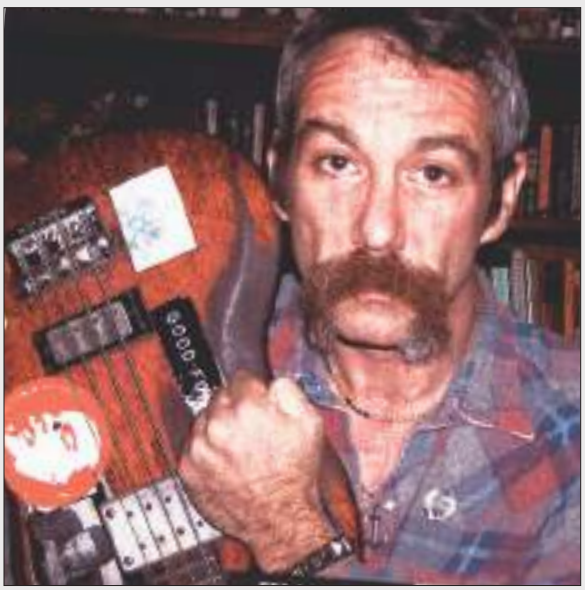
Other tracks feature the work of **Bob Lee** (Clawhammer), **J. Mascis** (Dinosaur Jr.), **Brock Avery** (Wayne Kramer), **Richie West** (Camper Van Beethoven), and **Steve Shelley** (Sonic Youth), helping make this a must-have for indie rock–drumming fans. (Wax junkies need to track down the blue-vinyl version for maximum effect.)



Mike: Yeah, you hit on it. Boon once said, "What we are doing is almost economics. We are building a little economy here." We do certain things to put it together, and we try not to relegate so much, because it can be dynamic and change in the moment. [Visual artist] Raymond Pettibon and I were eating dinner with [punk godfather] Richard Hell once, and he said, "When you first make a band, there's all these possibilities. And then sure enough, because of the bad habits we have as humans, we start narrowing it all down." All of a sudden all those things that were possible become, "Oh, *this* is the way we do it, this is our sound, this is our image…" and you end up doing *I Love Lucy* reruns. But you started at this point where anything was possible, at a time when you probably didn't know as much. Isn't that trippy how knowing more actually might hurt?

MD: Back to improvising for a moment. We can agree that it's all about listening and not treating music as a hierarchy. But what about the literal work of listening as you are concentrating on playing? Is it a matter of doing it until it becomes second-nature, or is it some kind of an independence skill that you can perfect? It seems to be a hard thing for people to do.

"Somebody told me once that the mind can only focus on three things at a time. So a lot of credit goes to the drummer. He's the most multi-task guy of us all."



The bass guitar Mike Watt is holding on the back of his album The Secondman's Middle Stand gives hints to his inspirations. There just might be room for a shot of Keith Moon on there.

Mike: Yeah, and technique absorbs so much of your thought, it's easy to miss the big picture. That's probably why orchestras have conductors, even though you've got these amazing technicians. I saw this happen once. You could tell it was kind of all over the place—and these were first-class musicians—but the conductor got them to submit. Not in a mean way, but he just got them to give up a little bit. And the thing got *so* powerful. I heard it right there, just like the way a garage band comes together.

Somebody told me once that the mind can only focus on three things at a time. So a lot of credit goes to the drummer. He's got his whole body moving. He's the most multi-task guy of us all—kick, hi-hat, snare, toms…he's got to keep that all together. So obviously for him, it's the groove, it's the rhythm. Also the tones of his instrument aren't as pronounced as maybe the melodic instruments, so he's thinking more about the groove. But then I've read about Coltrane and why he liked Rashied Ali, who played with no time. Coltrane wanted to get away from time. He wanted event-driven things instead of time-based things, which is an interesting way to look at it…a lot more drama, a lot more "film" or something.

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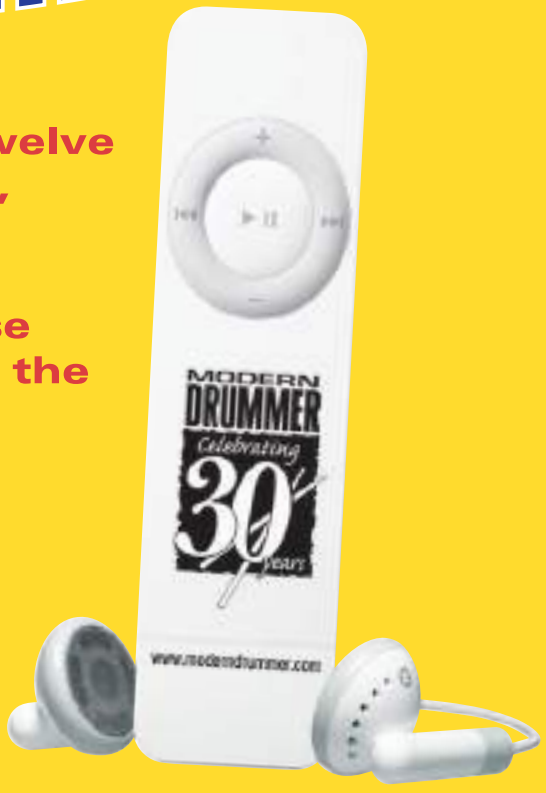

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MD: You've played on and off with George Hurley for quite a long time. Have you seen your playing relationship change, or is it the kind of thing where you played together so much early on that you're not really thinking consciously about it at this point?

Mike: Things develop from playing with somebody, big time. It's kind of an invisible thread between you, because you have shared so much time together. And there's the give-and-take thing. Sometimes it's like, Maybe I can inspire him with this lick here, or by leaving these openings here. Or you might think, That's kind of interesting what he's doing, I'm going to follow his lead. So there's not a lot of contention, like who's the cart and who's the ox. And you get confidence from that familiarity, like, He'll catch me if I fall. He knows I'm not trying to cut him. We've been doing this awhile, so, okay, the loop comes up a little short this time. It's alright, he'll be there for me on the 1.

MD: Given what you were talking about before regarding the open-ended nature of early punk, what was George's musical role at the beginning?

Mike: Punk was, first, an opportunity. Instead of just copying, let's see what we've got, what our inside voice sounds like. So there is always a gratitude towards that, almost a debt we felt. Also, being a power trio and wanting to make an interesting conversation out of the format, we really worked on the songs. We still wanted a beginning, middle, and end, and we would work out all the parts so that the drums could come in and have little things too. We didn't want the drummer just to be a backbeat, so we'd have Georgie come in and work out a lot of fills and stuff so they'd be very conversational too. And so there's a camaraderie there—leaning on each other to make the whole, knowing that if one cat fell the whole thing wouldn't fall. Of course D. Boon and I had a personal thing, since we were buddies before the band, and this was one way we were friends, how we shared the music. Then we kind of brought that to Georgie too.

MD: You've got pictures of D. Boon and John Coltrane on your bass. If there were room for a picture of a drummer, who might be there?

Mike: Oh, man, I really like Keith Moon. We all did. There was something about him. He was an enabler. It's funny, if you've ever heard Pete Townshend's demos and then what the songs sounded like when Moon's brought aboard, how it changed.

Then there's Dave Grohl…one of the most blow-away players. I know he doesn't like to play drums much nowadays, but *man* he was something else. George Hurley, of course. Then there was a band from the late '70s called The Pop Group, and their drummer, Bruce Smith, was incredible. They were kind of the band Gang Of Four copied—this idea of taking Captain Beefheart and mixing it with Parliament. Smith was only eighteen or nineteen years old, but I guess he was listening to all kinds of things. He had a big affect on us, and we never even got to see him. We only knew him by the records.

Of course there's Benny Benjamin and the Motown crew. Then there's a cat like Elvin Jones. Have you ever seen that video *A Different Drummer*? He talks about how the drums are colors, and how he's painting when he plays—what an analogy. But Elvin had a lot of trouble when he started. Guys said, "Hey, you're not playing the time." There was a lot of controversy.

MD: You haven't lost your passion or your interest in new music and discovering stuff. How are you feeling about music these days?

Mike: There's a mixture. If you think back, Pat Boone sold more "Tutti Frutti"s than Little Richard did. That was fifty years ago. But any farmer would tell you, if you want a good crop, use a lot of manure. So bring it on. You can be a little more cynical because the marketing has gotten more savvy, but I wouldn't want to put any nails in the coffin. Also, technology has gotten more econo, so you've got more cats in the game. You can make music in bedroom studios no problem. That was something that you couldn't do in the old days. So the opportunities may be more—though the burden of being creative will always be there, which maybe isn't a bad thing.

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Sittin' Pretty

Today's Most Innovative Drum Thrones

text by Rick Van Horn • photos by Ian Travis

There was a time when a drum company would sell you a drum stool along with your kit. It would have folding legs, a round top with a little padding, and some sort of height adjustment, and that was about it. Drum stools were functional items that were otherwise pretty much an afterthought.

Boy, have times changed. These days, most of the major drum manufacturers, as well as a number of specialty companies, have put a lot of time and energy into the design of drum "thrones" that now truly merit that title.

Of course, no single throne design will suit the needs of every drummer. Drummers vary in height and weight, which calls for equal variation in the size and strength of their thrones. Some drummers value portability above all else, while others are willing to schlepp a little more weight in order to gain extra comfort. Some drummers want backrests. Some like round seats, some prefer saddle-style seats, and some, frankly, need even more room in the tush department.

With all of this in mind, we thought it would be fun to take a look at some of today's wide-ranging throne designs. So we asked the manufacturers to send us two thrones each, encouraging them to send us their most interesting and innovative models. The *MD* editors served as an examination committee, checking out all the features and comparing notes about comfort, design, functionality, and other factors.

Because we asked the manufacturers to send us two of their spiffiest thrones, some of the models we received have dimensions or special features that might take them out of "general purpose" consideration. Others tend toward fairly familiar, straightforward designs. Neither approach is better than the other; it just goes to show that today's throne designs are as diverse as today's drummers. And that can only be a good thing.

So here's a look at twenty-eight thrones that run the gamut from small and lightweight to absolutely massive, with umpteen different seat designs, and even a few nifty colors. Between them all, you're sure to find something that fits your...uh...requirements.

CANNON

UPDT900 ACTION

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, fairly firm, sculpted contour
SIZE: 17" wide by 15" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: Threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT (dimension of widest leg spread): 22"
WEIGHT: 11 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Deep contour on saddle seat
Large wing bolt to secure height collar
COMMENTS:
Straightforward traditional design.
Height-locking collar does not prevent shaft from turning, no matter how tightly secured.
Lightweight and compact, yet completely serviceable for standard gigging.
LIST PRICE: $159.95

TFL10 CANISTER

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 2 3/4" foam, medium firmness
DIAMETER: 14"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: none
HEIGHT RANGE: fixed height of 22"
LEG DESCRIPTION: none; wood ply cylinder
WEIGHT: 14 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Covered in black gloss drum covering material.
Wood base does not actually sit flat on the floor; bottom features five small rubber feet.
COMMENTS:
Secure and comfortable (for those for whom the fixed height would work).
Attractive shell, but has no cover to prevent that shell from being scratched in transit, or to protect the seat top from damage.
Very small kitchen drawer–style handle would make the throne uncomfortable to carry if loaded with stands.
Small spring clips that hold the seat in place might catch on clothing.
LIST PRICE: $265

www.universalpercussion.com

DRUM WORKSHOP

9120 AIRLIFT

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, fairly firm, sculpted contour
SIZE: 19" wide by 16 1/2" deep
(effective seating area 14 1/2" deep)
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced four-leg design
FOOTPRINT: 28"
WEIGHT: 21 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Extra-large seat
Optional backrest with medium-sized oval back cushion.
COMMENTS:
Four-leg design provides extra stability, but can be a problem on uneven stage floor surfaces.
Saddle shape of seat forces the player's legs into a wide spread.
Backrest cushion is fixed; does not flex.
Hydraulic adjustment creates a "bounce factor" rather than a solid feel under the seat. This could be positive or negative, depending on the preference of the drummer.
Seat top tricky to remove from shaft; worked best only at full height extension.
Overall size of throne makes it seem suitable mainly for large, heavy drummers.
LIST PRICE: $299.99; optional backrest: $49.99

6100 CANISTER

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3 1/2" foam, moderate firmness
DIAMETER: 14 1/2"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: Rotational notch system; seven settings in 1" increments
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 21 1/2", High: 28 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: none; molded plastic cylinder
WEIGHT: 22 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Seat-case design features luggage-cart design, with removable pipe handle and wheeled base.
Hard plastic cover protects vinyl seat in transit.
Internal compartment helps divide contents.
Color-coded latches for quick assembly.
COMMENTS:
No additional handle to carry or lift the case.
Case is heavy to lift when empty; could be awkward to manage when loaded with stands.
LIST PRICE: $382.99

www.dwdrums.com

GIBRALTAR

9608VA WORKSTATION

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3 1/2" foam, medium firm
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 20", High: 28 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 19"
WEIGHT: 12 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Hook-and-loop fastener strip on edge of seat for attaching supplied cup holder, stick quiver, and towel would also allow attachment of other personal items or instruments.
Optional Universal Backrest, designed to fit on any non-hydraulic throne.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward traditional design.
Height-locking collar prevents shaft from turning.
Universal Backrest attachment clamp has two captured bolts, and must be installed over the top of the height shaft. A quick-release clamp would be handier to use.
LIST PRICE: $189.99;
GUBR Universal Backrest: $99.99

9608HM HYDRAULIC

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: fabric top with vinyl sides
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3 1/2" foam, soft
SIZE: 17" wide by 15" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 12 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Easy-reach height-control lever.
COMMENTS:
Hydraulic adjustment creates "bounce factor." (See DW9120)
Seat top was difficult to remove from the vertical shaft.
LIST PRICE: $219.99

www.gibraltarhardware.com

GMS

G3000T

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3 1/2" foam, moderately firm
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19 1/2", High: 27"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 21"
WEIGHT: 10 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Aluminum castings in several places help reduce weight.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward tripod design.
Lightweight and portable.
Affordably priced.
LIST PRICE: $157

www.gmsdrums.com

CANOPUS

HYBRID

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 2 1/2" firm foam
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 16", High: 22 1/4
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 17"
WEIGHT: 9 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Use of aluminum for threaded shaft and several fittings reduces weight dramatically.
Oversized rubber feet in comparison to other elements.
COMMENTS:
Lightest throne in survey; very portable.
Well-engineered height-locking system, with double collar.
Very low tripod gives limited height range, but good for low-sitters.
LIST PRICE: $319.99

www.canopusdrums.com

MAPEX

T560A

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, very firm
DIAMETER: 14"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 12 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Design of height-adjustment memory collar is aesthetically attractive.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward traditional design.
Height-locking collar prevents shaft from turning.
LIST PRICE: $152

T580A

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, very firm
SIZE: 15" wide by 12" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 11 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Design of height-adjustment memory collar is aesthetically attractive.
COMMENTS:
Contour of saddle seat creates an "edge" beneath the player's legs. This could be uncomfortable depending on seat height setting.
LIST PRICE: $157.51

www.mapexdrums.com

PEACE

DRT203R

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: fabric top with vinyl sides
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, medium firm
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19", High: 25"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced four-leg design
FOOTPRINT: 22"
WEIGHT: 14 1/4 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Easy-reach height-adjustment handle.
COMMENTS:
Four-leg design provides extra stability, but can be a problem on uneven stage floor surfaces.
Leg-spread adjustment has no locking bolt.
Wing-nut clamp on underside of seat makes getting the seat off the shaft easy.
LIST PRICE: $205

DRT202-M-C

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: fabric
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, medium firm
SIZE: 17" wide by 15" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18 1/2", High: 25"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced four-leg design
FOOTPRINT: 22"
WEIGHT: 13 1/4 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Easy-reach height-adjustment handle.
COMMENTS:
Four-leg design provides extra stability, but can be a problem on uneven stage floor surfaces.
Leg-spread adjustment has no locking bolt.
Nice contour to saddle seat; more comfortable than some other models.
LIST PRICE: $279

www.peacedrum.com

PEARL

D1000 SP ROADSTER

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, firm
DIAMETER: $12\frac{3}{4}$"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: straight shaft with shock-absorber system
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: $19\frac{1}{2}$", High: $24\frac{1}{2}$"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 22"
WEIGHT: $11\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Adjustable shock-absorber feature provides "bounce factor" feel similar to that of hydraulic models, without the extra mechanics.
Quick-release height adjustment clamp.
COMMENTS:
The straight, smooth shaft is the only one of its kind among our survey.
Security of the vertical height adjustment might be an issue for heavy drummers, even with an additional memory collar.
LIST PRICE: $189

D2000 BR

SEAT STYLE: reversible for round or saddle-style configuration
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: $4\frac{1}{2}$" foam, firm
SIZE: 16" wide by $11\frac{1}{2}$" (functional seating area)
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: $19\frac{1}{2}$", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced four-leg design
FOOTPRINT: 25"
WEIGHT: $22\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. (including optional backrest)
SPECIAL FEATURES:
High-tech adjustable backrest with small, contoured flexible pad.
Reversible seat provides saddle-style or round-style seating options; backrest attaches in either configuration.
COMMENTS:
Seat features unusual contours, including a cut-away area that could reduce stress on the tailbone.
Some players found the seat difficult to get comfortable on in either configuration. The flat area on top seems relatively small.
Small contour of the backrest pad provides good central support for the spine without extending into arm-movement area. Pad is also reversible to achieve different tapers for comfort. This was most impressive of all backrests in the survey.
LIST PRICE: $399 with optional backrest; $299 without

www.pearldrum.com

PORK PIE

STAR THRONE

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl sides, fabric top
THICKNESS & PADDING: 5" foam, fairly soft
DIAMETER: 14"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 21", High: 28"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: $13\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Custom seat with added graphics.
Large locking height collar and easy-adjust handle.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward tripod design with good high-level range, but doesn't go particularly low.
Seat is extremely comfortable.
LIST PRICE: $280

BIG BOY SPARKLE/VELVET

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl sides, fabric top
THICKNESS & PADDING: $4\frac{1}{2}$" foam, fairly soft
SIZE: 17" wide by $15\frac{1}{2}$" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 21", High: 28"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 14 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Custom seat with colorful elements.
Large locking height collar and easy-adjust handle.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward tripod design with good high-level range, but doesn't go particularly low.
Seat is extremely comfortable.
LIST PRICE: $255

www.porkpiedrums.com

PREMIER

6012RV

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3 1/2" foam, moderately firm
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19 1/2", High: 27"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 21"
WEIGHT: 10 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Aluminum castings in several places help reduce weight.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward tripod design.
Lightweight and portable.
Affordably priced.
LIST PRICE: $150

6012SV

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam in seating area, medium soft
SIZE: 17" wide by 15" deep (but contour reduces effective seating area)
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19 1/2", High: 27"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 21"
WEIGHT: 10 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Aluminum castings in several places help reduce weight.
COMMENTS:
Very deep contour to saddle seat.
Straightforward tripod design.
Lightweight and portable.
LIST PRICE: $195

www.premier-percussion.com

ROC-N-SOC

LUNAR GAS THRONE

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl sides, fabric top
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, moderately soft
SIZE: 17" wide by 16" deep (but contour reduces effective seating area)
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 19", High: 27"
LEG DESCRIPTION: one large vertical post out of five-leg star base
FOOTPRINT: 22 1/2"
WEIGHT: 14 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Optional backrest features large, chair-style support pad.
Choice of three height ranges for hydraulic shaft, and four colors for seat.
Star base provides stability with surprisingly low additional weight.
COMMENTS:
Star base is large and non-collapsible, reducing portability.
"Bounce factor" is less than on many other hydraulic thrones.
Seat is wide and comfortable.
Backrest attaches to seat via a relatively low-tech attachment system.
LIST PRICE: $219.95 including optional backrest

NITRO RIDER

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl sides, fabric top
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, moderately soft
SIZE: 17" wide by 16" deep (but contour reduces effective seating area)
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18 1/2", High: 24 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 19 lbs. with optional backrest; 16 lbs. without
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Choice of two height ranges for hydraulic shaft, and four colors for seat.
COMMENTS:
"Bounce factor" is less than on many other hydraulic thrones.
Seat is wide and comfortable, and was easy to remove from the hydraulic shaft.
LIST PRICE: $219.95

www.rocnsoc.com

SONOR

DT620

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: fabric
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, extremely hard
SIZE: 16" wide by 14 1/2" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 17", High: 27"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 14 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Excellent engineering and construction.
COMMENTS:
Contour of seat was like that of a racing bike, with a raised ridge in the center that was painful to sit on.
Fabric-covered seat would absorb perspiration.
Priced high for a traditionally designed throne.
LIST PRICE: $350

DT610

SEAT STYLE: round
COVERING: fabric
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, very firm
DIAMETER: 13"
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 27 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 20"
WEIGHT: 13 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Excellent engineering and construction.
COMMENTS:
Straightforward tripod design.
Fabric-covered seat would absorb perspiration.
Very firm seat seemed uncomfortable.
LIST PRICE: $300

www.sonor.com

SOUNDSEAT

MP STAR BASE

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: leather
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, medium firm
SIZE: 20" wide by 18" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 23 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: single large vertical post out of five-leg star base
FOOTPRINT: 24"
WEIGHT: 14 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Only leather seats in survey.
Composite materials help reduce weight.
Star base provides stability.
COMMENTS:
Seat is extremely wide and deep (largest in survey).
Height range is limited.
"Bounce factor" less than some other thrones.
No lock against rotation; seat can rotate freely.
Overall size of throne makes it seem suitable mainly for large, heavy drummers.
LIST PRICE: $190

BREAKDOWN MODEL

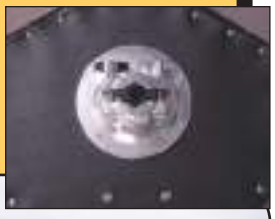
SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: leather
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, medium firm
SIZE: 18" wide by 15 1/2" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 17", High: 24"
LEG DESCRIPTION: single large vertical post out of five-leg star base
FOOTPRINT: 24"
WEIGHT: 23 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Leather seat.
Some dimensions reduced to permit breakdown for touring.
Mechanically sophisticated adjustable backrest included.
Optional personalized carry bag available.
COMMENTS:
Seat is only slightly smaller than MP version.
Throne breaks down into two or three separate pieces.
Height range is limited.
"Bounce factor" less than some other thrones.
No lock against rotation; seat can rotate freely.
LIST PRICE: $280 for throne; $120 for personalized carry bag

www.soundseat.com

TAMA

HT730 1ST CHAIR ERGO RIDER TRIO

SEAT STYLE: rounded saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 4" foam, soft
SIZE: 17" wide by 14" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18 1/2", High: 25 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 19"
WEIGHT: 13 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Seat features attractive embroidered logo and graphics.
Lockable nylon bushing on seat-mounting bracket allows side-to-side seat movement without wearing out the fitting or changing the height of the vertical shaft.
Easy-adjust height collar.
COMMENTS:
Seat was softer and less contoured than Wide Rider model; proved very comfortable for all testers.
LIST PRICE: $189.99;
optional backrest: $74.99



HT530 1ST CHAIR WIDE RIDER

SEAT STYLE: saddle
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam, firm
SIZE: 16 1/2" wide by 15 1/2" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 26 1/2"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 19"
WEIGHT: 18 1/2 lbs. with backrest
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Seat features attractive embroidered logo and graphics
Small-profile backrest adjusts forward/backward and high/low, with very solid attachment system.
Easy-adjust height collar.
COMMENTS:
Backrest attachment system includes a hinged, fold-down design for easy pack-up.
Contour of seat was comfortable for all testers.
LIST PRICE: $189.99;
optional backrest: $74.99

www.tama.com

YAMAHA

DSM 100 MESH

SEAT STYLE: rounded rectangular dished mesh
COVERING: mesh
THICKNESS & PADDING: 1" overall. Mesh stretched over steel frame, with molded rubber edges.
SIZE: 18" wide by 12 1/2" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: threaded rod
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 18", High: 25"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced tripod
FOOTPRINT: 23"
WEIGHT: 16 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Mesh-covered seat provides ventilation.
Large locking height collar.
Drawstring carry bag for seat top.
COMMENTS:
Seat is slightly tapered toward the front, but still presents a pretty abrupt and solid edge beneath the player's legs.
Mesh provides excellent ventilation, and would be good for drummers with perspiration issues.
Seat is very hard, might prove uncomfortable over long periods.
Complete unit is fairly heavy for a fold-up throne.
LIST PRICE: $370

DS1100

SEAT STYLE: large rectangular contour
COVERING: vinyl
THICKNESS & PADDING: 3" foam; firm
SIZE: 18 1/2" wide by 14 1/2" deep
HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT: hydraulic
HEIGHT RANGE: Low: 17", High: 26"
LEG DESCRIPTION: double-braced four-leg design
FOOTPRINT: 26"
WEIGHT: 17 1/2 lbs.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
Very heavy-duty Toyota automotive-style hydraulic cylinder.
Extra-wide seat.
Locking bottom leg brace.
COMMENTS:
Easy to get seat off of hydraulic shaft.
Very little "bounce factor."
Overall size of throne makes it seem suitable mainly for large, heavy drummers.
LIST PRICE: $370

www.yamahadrums.com

Throne Thoughts: *MD* Editors' Picks

Like any other group of drummers, we *MD* editors have different body types, musical tastes, and gigging requirements. We also have different preferences when it comes to seat size, shape, thickness, height, support design, portability, and the myriad other factors that go into choosing a drum throne. Here's each of our personal faves from the pack.

BILL MILLER

EDITOR IN CHIEF

In my thirty-five-year drumming career, I've tried many types of thrones. I've experimented with every seat height imaginable, from very low (a la early Vinnie Colaiuta) to almost standing up. The height that works best for me is about $23^1/_2$", which—given my 6' 1" frame—allows my thighs to angle down slightly when I'm playing.

I like a firm seat. A little padding is enough. (At 210 pounds, I have enough of my own.) I also like a throne that feels solid, meaning it can be tightened so it won't spin or have any "play." (That's why I don't use hydraulic models, as they tend to bounce.) I also prefer a throne with three legs—not four or more, as some of our survey models have. (I frequently perform on stages that aren't level. Having three legs keeps the throne from rocking.) Finally, I play a fair amount of gigs, so I want a throne that packs up easily and doesn't take up a lot of space in my hardware bag. (I usually toss the seat top in my cymbal bag.)

Based on all of these preferences, my favorite of our survey group is the Mapex T560A. It's firm and solid, yet lightweight, and it won't take up a lot of space in a case. Plus, at a list price of $152, it's nicely priced. The other throne I like is the Gibraltar 9608VA Workstation. It's not quite as firm as the Mapex, but it is solid, and the stick-on accessories feature is a great idea.

RICK VAN HORN

SENIOR EDITOR

I'm the smallest of the *MD* editors, at 5' 6" and 150 pounds. So while I can appreciate some of the mega-sized seats that we were sent, I felt a bit like a kid in his daddy's recliner when I sat on them. Besides, I do a *lot* of load-in/load out gigs, so compactness and portability are important factors for me. On the other hand, I also play a lot of theatrical shows. These involve sitting through long rehearsals, as well as performing several shows over a single weekend. So comfort over the "long haul" is also very important.

I sit about 22" high, with my thighs sloping slightly forward rather than being parallel to the ground. So I favor "saddle-style" seats that are contoured to allow my legs to drop down comfortably. I also favor tripod bases because they're easier to fit amid a multi-pedal setup.

Given all of the above, my preferences are medium-firm, saddle-style seats with backrests, on tripod bases that I can fold up and toss in a hardware bag. I'm willing to carry the seat and the backrest separately, if necessary. Standouts in our survey group that meet these criteria include the Gibraltar 9608 Hydraulic model fitted with the GUBR universal backrest, the Roc-N-Soc Nitro Rider with optional backrest, and the Tama HT530 1st Chair Wide Rider with the optional hinged backrest (which is particularly nifty because it doesn't have to be detached for pack-up).

My honorable mentions include the Canopus Hybrid, Premier 6012 SV, GMS G3000T, and Cannon UPDT900 Action models. Not all have saddle seats, and none have

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backrests. But they are all stable, comfortable thrones with ultra-light tripods that make them particularly portable, and most are fairly inexpensive. At the other extreme, I dig the DW 6100 seat-case simply for its originality and flexibility. I do a few ultra-small-scale jobs on which I could toss my bass drum pedal, some light-duty stands, and a stick bag into that case, grab the handle, and head for the gig.

ADAM BUDOFSKY
MANAGING EDITOR

Church pews and racing-bike saddles have always given me nightmares. (Though they've also provided handy excuses to avoid church and exercise!) Naturally, I'm no more fond of too-hard drum thrones, so I appreciate soft but substantial seats like those on Tama's HT730 1st Chair Ergo Rider and Pork Pie's round Star Seat model. The Tama seat shape is a perfect compromise between standard round and bike-styles, which always leave me with an unstable sensation. The Tama gets extra points for having the coolest logo of the lot—embroidered, no less—and the Pork Pie rates for its extra-thick, butt-conforming padding. Both stools employ tripod bases—better for lopsided stages—and neither is a hydraulic, which, for me, are too "spinny," bouncy, expensive, and liable to wear out.

BILLY AMENDOLA
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

To be honest, I never really paid that much attention to thrones. I've been comfortable with the one I have for many years. But on a recent session for which I was told, "Just bring your sticks, we have everything," I came to realize very quickly how an uncomfortable throne can affect one's playing enough to ruin a recording.

I'm about average height (5' 8"), and I sit medium to low. My butt's small, so I don't require a big seat. But I do like that seat to be soft and comfortable. So my survey favorites were all pretty cushiony.

The Gibraltar 9608HM (with the optional backrest) was the one I dug the most. It was also the only one of my three choices that featured a hydraulic lift, which I prefer. I also liked the Tama HT730 1st Chair Ergo Rider. Besides having a soft seat, the "tooled leather" design on the top and the embroidered logo on the back gave it a cool look. I also found the Pork Pie red velvet and silver-sparkle Big Boy saddle throne to be comfortable and attractive.

MIKE DAWSON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

I'm a pretty tall guy (6' 2"), and I have legs like a gazelle, so I need a throne that'll go fairly high. I also don't have much junk in the trunk, so I look for something with a good amount of cushion. To me, the Premier 6012RV saddle-style seat was a perfect match. I also really dig the Gibraltar 9608VA Workstation with the stick-on attachments. It would be great for multi-percussion gigs where I need to switch between different types of shakers and sticks. Honorable mention goes to the Pork Pie Big Boy red velvet and silver-sparkle saddle throne. A comfy seat and cool looks made it a standout.

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Avishai Cohen's Mark Guiliana

Experimental Garage Jazz

Story by Joe Bergamini

Photos by Paul La Raia

On the debut release from his band Heernt, *Locked In A Basement*, Mark Guiliana and his bandmates draw from a huge palette of talent and influences to create music that defies classification. With equal amounts swing chops, rock energy, and funkiness, Mark is truly one of the up-and-coming stars of today's drumming scene. At the ripe young age of twenty-five, he has traveled around the world playing with jazz bassist Avishai Cohen. He's also gained the attention of many great jazz musicians, as well as the accolades of drumming greats such as Steve Smith, John Riley, and Bill Bruford.

Speaking of Guiliana and his *Locked In A Basement* CD, consider the words of Mr. Bruford himself: "Phew! The future of music is safe after all. This is the most exuberant, dramatic, beautiful, sassy, genre-busting little outing that I've heard since I don't know when. This is the album I wish I'd made. I don't have the energy, talent, stamina, and sheer guts that these young ankle biters do. Quite the most brilliant record you're going to hear for the foreseeable future, so I recommend immediate purchase."

Guiliana is a player who truly has all the bases covered. The songs on *Locked In A Basement* illustrate this. The opening track, "Johnny2Rocktime," is a driving uptempo swing groove with Mark displaying a highly developed post-bop sensibility and insane four-way independence. The creativity and rhythmic inventiveness of "Brown Bird, Olive Sloth, Green Dragon" is followed later by the beautiful, minimalistic feel of "Aaaahh...." Mark's variation in tempo and dynamics on

these tracks is astounding.

To check out a machine-like trance groove in the drum 'n' bass style, listen to "Quick Groove Rolling." And any drummer who listens to the incredible display of soloistic chops, driving groove, and metric modulation on songs like "P - 3.1415" will respond with a joyous, "I gotta get this CD!," like I did.

I had the pleasure of teaching Mark for a few years when he was in middle and high school. After that, my sense of pride was only exceeded by my amazement as I watched him explode into the amazing player he is today. Mark has a way of giving out lots of credit to others—his teachers, influences, friends, colleagues. His humility and great personality make his talent all the more admirable.

MD: How did you meet and begin playing with Avishai Cohen?

Mark: I met Avishai in 2000 through my roommate at William Paterson University, Brian Killeen, who was studying with Avishai at the time. We would go into New York to hear Avishai's band as often as we could, and we soon became friends. I don't even think he knew I played drums. Avishai showed up one night at a friend's party in Jersey and our impromptu playing there led to the creation of the rock band Gadu, which lasted from 2000 to sometime in 2003. That band, which included WPU friends Jeff Taylor and Dan Hindman, had a weekly gig in NYC for the majority of that period in which Avishai and I had the opportunity to develop the rhythmic relationship we have now.

As I was graduating in 2003, Avishai asked me to be a part of his new jazz project. Since then, I've played on his last three records and have traveled all around the world.

MD: When playing in Avishai's band, are you given free rein to do what you want, or is Avishai more of a hands-on leader?

Mark: It's a little of both. I think the compositions are so strong that they really tell me what to play without him having to do it verbally. He won't be shy about guiding me in a certain direction, but he rarely tells me to play specific things. He is open to a lot of things, we trust each other, and there's definitely a shared creativity.

MD: Let's discuss your background. When did you start getting interested in jazz?

Mark: If I may, I'd like to discuss my pre-jazz phase, because it's just as much a part of me as jazz is. Before I started playing drums, I was checking out bands like Red Hot Chili Peppers and Nirvana, and it was those guys, Chad Smith and Dave Grohl, who really inspired me to play. I still feel very close to that music; it will always be an important ingredient in my sound.

Through our lessons, you exposed me to all types of music and encouraged me to

Mark's Kit

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute
A. 5x14 Ludwig Acrolite snare
B. 8x10 tom
C. 14x14 floor tom
D. 16x16 floor tom (used occasionally)
E. 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: various
1. 13" Sabian Duo hats
2. 16" Sabian HHX Evolution crash
3. 21" Sabian Fierce ride
4. 20" Zildjian Crash Of Doom
5. 10" Sabian HH China Kang (broken) on 10" Paiste 502 splash (not shown)

Percussion: various instruments and toys from around the world, typewriter

Hardware: lightweight Yamaha and Tama stands, Yamaha bass drum pedal with loose spring tension

Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on all drums except bass drum, which has an Evans EMAD batter

Sticks: Zildjian John Riley Signature model

Electronics: Boss SP-303 sampler, Panasonic Slim Line Auto Stop tape recorder (old)

"The downtown scene really opened me up conceptually, to an 'anything goes' type of way."

get involved in any musical situation I could. In auditioning for the high school jazz band, I was introduced to the world of Buddy Rich. He was the perfect bridge into jazz because he catered to my need at the time for lots of exciting technical facility, but also steered me into the larger world of jazz. Shortly after, I discovered Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Max Roach, Philly Joe Jones…the list goes on.

MD: What was amazing to me is that you understood that stuff on an intuitive level better than your teacher ever did! You took to it like a fish to water.

Mark: Thanks. So many things attracted me to that music. Another big reason I got deep into that world was because I started studying with John Riley while I was still in high school. He really challenged me and helped define my path. That was a really important time for me. His teachings have sustained through everything I've done musically.

MD: At that point you decided you wanted to pursue music, and you became a college music major.

Mark: Fortunately my parents were very supportive of me pursuing music, and that made it an easy decision to go to school for it. I decided to go to William Paterson University because it was close to New York City, it wasn't too expensive, and John Riley was there. The school offered a really nice balance between supplying you with working tools that you would need for a career in music, and the freedom to do what you want and create your own path.

Another important influence at WPU was Kevin Norton. He's not just a drummer, but an amazing composer and percussionist. Sometimes at our lessons, he would play vibraphone and I would play drumset, and we'd improvise for an hour. He also helped with my compositions, which I started getting serious about towards the end of school.

Most importantly, I made amazing friends at school, and I'm still working with a bunch of them today. Everyone is still doing music, and doing their own thing. It was just a really positive community.

MD: I think it was around this time that you started coming around my house and talking about guys like Jim Black and Jeff Ballard—some of the more eclectic and avant-garde players.

Mark: Exactly. I can't talk about Jim enough. I went to see him a lot, and he blew me away every time. In his performances there was no shtick, no licks—just musicality and creativity at its highest level. He also inspired me to explore the world of computer-based music as a vehicle for composition as well as improvisation.

The whole downtown scene in general really opened me up conceptually, to an "anything goes" type of way. It helped me to see improvising from a much broader perspective and inspired me to truly investigate timbre, both acoustic and electronic.

Jeff Ballard was also a big influence. He feels music in a very special way. I got to hear him in many different settings, and his personality always came through. Also, around this time I met one of my favorite

drummers and friends, Dan Weiss. He has been a mentor on many levels.

MD: One of the other things I admire about you is that when you went to college you didn't abandon any of the things that you grew up loving. You stayed very attuned to mainstream music, and you incorporate a lot of that in your playing. And we listened to people like Vinnie and Gadd a lot too.

Mark: Those guys will always be heroes. I really admire their depth and range. They always put the music first. Only if the situation calls for it does the drum stuff come out. I also have to say, before we go any further, that my biggest inspiration, past or present, is Tony Williams—not only as a drummer, but as a composer, bandleader, and innovator. Everything he played had such conviction and integrity.

John Riley had me transcribe what Tony played on the title track of Miles' "Nefertiti." Those eight minutes of drumming are probably the single biggest influence on my playing, specifically my phrasing.

MD: Now let's fast-forward a bit. You've played with Avishai and toured the world, and now you have your own group. You guys have an amazing record out, and a lot of people are noticing it. How did you form Heernt?

Mark: Heernt started rather casually as an outlet for the new compositions I was writing. I'd booked a couple of gigs at the C-Note, a small club in New York, and called one of my best friends from college, Zac Colwell [saxophone/keyboards] and a bass player that I met right around that time, Neal Persiani. It was actually very casual, at first just getting together and working out this music in front of people. Then, after a couple of gigs and the guys coming over, rehearsing and recording in my basement, we realized it was a band.

It kind of presented itself to me, and was not forced. At that point the guys started contributing material, and we continued to explore and play more and more shows. It all kind of found its place, and we made this record.

MD: The music you guys play is a really inspiring mixture of a lot of different things. I'd like you to talk a little bit about your philosophy behind the music.

Mark: We started calling it "experimental garage jazz." "Experimental" refers to the fact that our influences come from many different directions and art forms. I tend to favor the more abstract approach to things, which I think comes out in our presentation of the music. "Garage" is probably my favorite part of the description, because it describes the homemade and dirty perspective that we like to maintain. It's like, this is who we are: We're young, and we are part fifteen-year-old kids in a rock band in the garage, part trained jazz musicians. I feel really attached to that kind of reckless abandon. "Jazz" simply means that there's a lot of improvisation involved.

MD: The backbeat is still an integral part of your concept, along with your jazz background, and you seem to have really embraced electronica as part of your sound.

Mark: Absolutely. That music keeps me excited.

MD: One of the most brilliant things on the record, I think, is the title track, "Locked In A Basement." This typewriter starts clicking away, and as the song progresses it's revealed that the typewriter is actually playing this really syncopated rhythm in time. First of all, how long is that phrase?

Mark: Six bars.

MD: So then the keyboard player and the top half of your drumset play a straight 4/4 groove, while the bass player and your bass drum play along with the typewriter rhythm. It's such a great example of your creativity. How did you develop this song?

Mark: My girlfriend has this funky vintage typewriter, which she used to type me this letter once. The way the text appeared on the page was so dirty and uneven, and it had so much character. I was intrigued by its old, authentic feeling. So I started to mess around with it. Instead of scribbling down notes about songs, it had this formal feel if I did it on the typewriter.

I ended up bringing it to the studio, encouraging everyone to retreat to the corner whenever they felt fit to share their thoughts on the typewriter. It was kind of a gag. When we didn't have an intro for "Locked," we all joked that this was an opportunity to put the typewriter on the record. Before we knew it, we were figuring out the best way to mike it.

MD: So you guys had the rhythm written into the song before you came up with the idea of the typewriter?

Mark: Right.

MD: So now the record is out. What's coming up?

Mark: We're playing a bunch in and around New York and just trying to get the word out about *Locked In A Basement*. Heernt is an everyday activity. I'm always trying to write new music and keep the momentum happening. We just recently finished our homemade DVD, *The Making Of Heernt*, and I've been working on packaging those. Whether it's mailing out records or being on the phone trying to get gigs, there is always something to do. If it was up to me, we'd be playing in rock clubs so that we could be as loud and as adventurous as possible. But we'll play for anyone who's willing to listen.

MD: Your sound palette is really broad. How do you approach getting all the different sounds that I hear in your playing?

Mark: Well, my basic setup is a standard four-piece jazz kit. But recently I've been adding a second floor tom, and de-tuning it completely to get kind of a dead cannon effect. Having a source of extreme low end other than the bass drum has been a huge addition to my general sound.

The cymbals are basically a hi-hat, a crash, two rides, and a little homemade thing of some stacked broken cymbals. I also have a bunch of toys—instruments from around the world, broken cymbals, household items, etc.—that I experiment with by putting them on the drums or cymbals, playing them with my hands, throwing them…whatever the situation demands. I'm always trying to refine my sound and make the most out of what I have.

MD: At only twenty-five, you've found your voice and achieved a lot of success. What are your goals for the future?

Mark: For Heernt, I want to get the word out about *Locked In A Basement*, not compromise our vision, and get to our next level as a band. Also, I've been doing a lot of work at home, recording and producing some small projects. I want to get deeper into that whole world. I want to get a new project off the ground as well, which is an outlet for the electronic music I've been writing. My setup with that band will include a computer, and it will give me a chance to play with some sequences.

Overall, I want to continue to put myself in challenging and rewarding musical situations, and be genuinely happy and proud of the music I'm making.

BASEMENT LISTENING

GUILIANA'S BEST RECORDINGS

Artist	Album
Heernt	Locked In A Basement
Avishai Cohen	Continuo
Avishai Cohen	At Home
Avishai Cohen	Lyla
popheAd	single (2001)

HIS FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Nefertiti	Tony Williams
Miles Davis	Filles De Kilimanjaro	Tony Williams
Roy Haynes	Out Of The Afternoon	Roy Haynes
Bob Marley	Exodus	Carlton Barrett
Camarón-Paco De Lucia	Calle Real	Ruben Dantas
Wayne Krantz	2 Drink Minimum	Zach Danziger
Dan Weiss	Tintal Drumset Solo	Dan Weiss
Dillinger Escape Plan	Miss Machine	Chris Pennie
Jeff Buckley	Grace	Matt Johnson
Squarepusher	Feed Me Weird Things	Tom Jenkinson–programmer
Brad Mehldau	Largo	Matt Chamberlain, Jorge Rossy, Jim Keltner

To hear some of Mark Guiliana's tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

The Knack's Bruce Gary

Bruce performing with The Knack in 1979

Bruce Gary—whose muscular tom-tom introduction helped The Knack's "My Sharona" break out of the late-'70s doldrums of disco and drum machines—died this past August 22 in Tarzana, California, following a battle with lymphoma. He was fifty-five.

The Knack was formed in Los Angeles in 1978. A year later, "My Sharona" hit big, taking the group's debut album *Get The Knack* to multi-platinum status. The group's second album, *But The Little Girls Understand*, sold another two million copies.

The Knack's music was influenced by the rough punchiness of The Kinks and The Who, and much of that energy was supplied by Bruce Gary's aggressive drumming attack. (Bruce's career with The Knack is outlined in the Dec. '80/Jan. '81 issue of *MD*, in a feature titled "Rock Drummers Of The '80s.")

After leaving The Knack in the mid-1980s, Bruce went on to a lengthy career as a journeyman session drummer. He recorded with George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Stephen Stills, Jack Bruce, Rod Stewart, Sheryl Crow, Bette Midler, Yoko Ono, and Harry Nilsson. He also worked with blues masters Albert King, Albert Collins, and John Lee Hooker, and he toured with Spencer Davis and former Eagles member Randy Meisner. Bruce was also a producer. He created a CD of drum samples called *Bruce Gary's Drum Vocabulary*, and he co-produced a series of posthumous releases from Jimi Hendrix.

Getting The Knack

Bruce Gary's propulsive drumming was on display from Day 1.

The Knack's 1979 debut, *Get The Knack,* is a rollicking blast of well-executed guitar pop, and proof positive that Knack pounder Bruce Gary deserves a place on the list of history's most exciting rock drummers.

Recorded in just thirteen days for under $20,000, *Get The Knack* is the sound of a well-rehearsed band playing live in the studio with minimal overdubs. Song arrangements and players' parts were hammered out and perfected well in advance, leaving producer Mike Chapman with the sole responsibility of getting the right sounds to tape. The band was so on top of its game that most of the album's master tracks are first or second takes.

It's important to note that the drum sound on *Get The Knack* is markedly out of character with a lot of hit records that were being made in the late '70s. Where the norm was to have a flat, fairly dead-sounding kit, *Get The Knack* sees Gary and Chapman going in the opposite direction with lively, open-sounding toms, a popping snare, and a substantial amount of sound-expanding room ambience.

It's this unobtrusive recording technique that really lets us experience the full force of Gary's drumming, especially on the album's opening one-two punch of "Let Me Out" and "Your Number Or Your Name." Gary once described The Knack as being "a very good, sensible pop band with a very bombastic drummer," a notion evidenced by the barrage of gonzo fills that punctuate "Your Number" and bring to mind *Who's Next*–era Keith Moon. A cover of Buddy Holly & The Crickets' "Heartbeat" gives Gary a chance to pay tribute to Crickets drummer Jerry Allison by replicating Allison's classic "Peggy Sue" tom paradiddles during the verses, while showing off some of his own tasteful hi-hat work on the song's bridges. "Oh Tara" finds Gary laying down a solid quarter-note kick/snare pattern that would make AC/DC's Phil Rudd proud.

Of course, the album's monster hit single was "My Sharona." Not many drummers can lay claim to an intro that's become part of the pop music landscape, but with his memorable snare/tom flam prelude, Gary did just that. The real highlight of the song, though, comes during the second half of lead guitarist Berton Averre's extended solo, when Gary kicks into overdrive and pounds out a galloping double-time beat that cranks the song's energy level up several notches. This is rock 'n' roll at its most exhilarating.

"Bruce is one of the great drummers in the history of rock," said Knack lead singer/guitarist Doug Fieger in the recently released DVD *Getting The Knack*. He's also one of the most influential: By injecting powerhouse drumming into a pop song context, Gary helped create a style that continued into the next two decades and beyond. Play *Get The Knack* and Nirvana's *Nevermind* back to back, and you'll see why Kurt Cobain proclaimed his love for the band, calling Nirvana nothing more than "a '90s version of The Knack." The road to "Teen Spirit" just might begin here.

Jon Wurster

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Kris Ardolino

Kickin' Dirt

Since 2003, Baltimore-born Kris Ardolino has been the rhythmic powerhouse behind Houston, Texas metal band Dirt. The east-coast speed metal drummer's no-holds-barred approach—which features bone-crushing beats and syncopated double kicks—is the backbone of Dirt's 2005 release, *Ashes To Ashes*, which was produced by Dez Fafara of Devil Driver and Coal Chamber. On the opening track, "Incinerated," Kris lays down some super heavy backbeats before launching into a Dave Lombardo-inspired thrash beat. The album closes with "Scared," where Ardolino lets loose with a barrage of double bass, roundhouse fills, and two-hand ride patterns. Kris and Dirt are currently in the studio finishing up their next album, due for release this winter.

While Dirt is his main artistic endeavor, Kris also holds down a day job in the telecommunications industry to help pay the bills. "I have no pipe dreams about making it big," says Kris. "But I will never give up trying, and I will never give up playing. It's what keeps me sane!" He concludes, "I still have the same dream as every musician, to play in front of crowds of thousands. But what matters to me is that I leave a mark so that someone now or in the future hears what I've done and says, 'That drummer's a badass!'"

Hometown: Houston, Texas
Influences: Nicko McBrain, Neil Peart, John Bonham, Buddy Rich, Ian Paice, Dave Lombardo, Shannon Larkin, Mike Portnoy, Charlie Benante, Stevie Smith, Scott Rockenfield, Paul Bostaph, Eric Singer
Gear: Ludwig and Pearl drums, Zildjian, Sabian, and Wuhan cymbals, Pro-Mark sticks, Gibraltar and Tama hardware, Remo heads, and Humes & Berg cases
More info: www.myspace.com/dirt

Jeff Thal

NYC Transplant Dives Deep In Tampa Rock Scene

New York native Jeff Thal has been hooked on drumming since the age of ten, when he first saw Buddy Rich perform on TV. After years of formal study—where he honed his reading skills, double bass chops, and odd-time fluency—Jeff made his mark on the New York City area as the drummer in his brother Ron's progressive rock/rap group, Bumblefoot.

Jeff now lives in Tampa, Florida and is the songwriter, producer, and drummer for mainstream rock band A Deeper Down. Their 2005 release, *Alone*, combines the energy of alternative rock bands like Stone Temple Pilots with classic pop melodicism. On "Run," Jeff throws in just enough of his formidable chops—quick double kick flourishes and nimble tom fills—to keep the track pushing forward.

Though he loves playing mainstream rock, Jeff's passions are still fueled by unorthodox progressive playing. Says Jeff, "There's nothing like a good challenge to keep you out of your comfort zone."

Hometown: Tampa, Florida
Influences: Buddy Rich, Neil Peart, Bill Bruford, Steve Gadd, Steve Smith, Dave Weck, and Carter Beauford
Gear: Tama drums, Zildjian cymbals, DW pedals, and Vic Firth sticks
More info: www.adeeperdown.com

Shane Speltz

Catching Breaks With Scarlet Haze

Thirty-one-year-old Shane Speltz has been drumming for the past twenty years, reaching a professional level at sixteen. He's currently the drummer in Minneapolis, Minnesota rock band Scarlet Haze. Though only one and a half years into their career, Scarlet Haze has achieved a significant amount of success throughout their local metro area. Recently, Shane and his band opened for Bon Jovi at a sold-out show at the Target Center Arena in Minneapolis. Scarlet Haze's first album, *Out Of The Dark*, was released earlier this year, and the band has been busy touring regionally to support it. They are also scheduled to appear on the *Conan O'Brien Show* later this fall.

When discussing his goals, Shane reveals, "Ultimately, I hope to be signed to a major label one day, which would enable me to tour the world and, hopefully, get an unlimited supply of drumsticks. And gracing the cover of *Modern Drummer* wouldn't be so bad either." The drummer smiles. "But more importantly, I just hope to be successful in what I know how to do best."

Hometown: Minneapolis, Minnesota
Gear: Premier and Pearl drums, Zildjian cymbals, Yamaha and Tama hardware, Zildjian sticks, and Roland electronics
Influences: John Bonham, Neil Peart, and Phil Collins
More info: www.scarlethaze.com

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RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale

★★★★★ Classic
★★★★☆ Excellent
★★★☆☆ Good
★★☆☆☆ Fair
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

FREDY STUDER/HAMID DRAKE/ MICHAEL ZERANG
DRUMMIN' CHICAGO

★★★★★

A masterful display of space, texture, color, abstraction, and groove, this collaboration among three of Chicago's top drum improvisers—**FREDY STUDER**, **HAMID DRAKE**, and **MICHAEL ZERANG**—is not to be missed. Opening with bowed gongs and a hip cross-stick groove, the trio evokes an amazing range of sounds. Playing cymbals with Tubz against frame drums is just another example of the creative instrumentation on display. Yet beyond the choice of sounds, it's the execution and interplay among these three that makes this album so successful. At times haunting and thoughtful, it never becomes overbearing and always hangs together musically. (www.fmr-records.com) **Martin Patmos**

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD
THE NEW BLACK

★★★★★

Power and precision go hand-in-hand on Strapping Young Lad's latest. Driven by the unrelenting, accurate delivery of drummer **GENE HOGLAN**, *The New Black* puts these metal vets through a series of precarious twists and turns, sometimes within the span of a single song ("Antiproduct"). And Hoglan's the daredevil behind the wheel, throwing the shift lever around, from his swingy yet scarring accents on the chorus of "Monument" to the blitzkrieg bass drum–driven "U Suck." As for "Wrongside," which sports supreme, speed limit–defying bass drum work, it's definitely on the right side of this course. Extreme metal drumming really doesn't get much better than this. (Century Media) **Waleed Rashidi**

MY LATEST OBSESSION

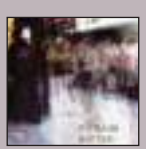
BY PAT METHENY'S
ANTONIO SANCHEZ

I could listen to Me'Shell Ndegeocello's *Peace Beyond Passion* album every day. I never get tired of it. The production is great, the writing is phenomenal, and the playing is out of this world. It's *so* groovy and refined. **GENE LAKE** plays on most of the tracks; a few others feature drum machines programmed by Ndegeocello and David Gamson. On his tracks, Gene plays great, never overdoing it—very tight grooves, but with a relaxed, loose feel. The concept of the album as a whole is very concise, but I love every tune individually as well.

Check out Antonio Sanchez on The Pat Metheny Group's *The Way Up*, Miguel Zenon's *Jibaro*, and David Sanchez' *Travesia*, and at antoniosanchez.net.

COOL MUSIC OUT NOW!
WHAT'S NEW IN MODERN JAZZ
BY MIKE DAWSON

LIBERTY ELLMAN OPHIUCHUS BUTTERFLY
Dense counterpoint, unorthodox instrumentation, and funky semi-grooves—**Gerald Cleaver** contributes angular syncopation and electronica-inspired beats. (Pi)



PETE McCANN MOST FOLKS
Mark Ferber gets down Bill Stewart–style on this all-original release. (OmniTone)

JAMIE STEWARDSON JHAPTAL
Dynamic and propelling, drummer **George Schuller** keeps the momentum on challenging new jazz sounds. (Fresh Sound)

MD RADIO

To hear the artists reviewed in this month's Critique, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

MEDESKI SCOFIELD MARTIN & WOOD
OUT LOUDER

★★★★☆

There's a new partner at the firm of MMW! But hey, it's not just *any* newbie—it's guitar great **John Scofield.** These four last teamed up for 1998's *A Go Go*, but Sco ran that show; *Out Louder* is a full collaboration. Compositional flourishes take a back seat to fathoms-deep grooves and exciting group interplay, but each tune explores distinct textural territory. **BILLY MARTIN** kicks off the proceedings with a tasty descending lick and just gets funkier from there. On the long, improvised "Down The Tube," he breaks from his laid-back, behind-the-beat feel and really pushes the band—and then he settles into finger-lickin' ghost-note funk once again. (Indirecto) **Michael Parillo**

WOLFMOTHER WOLFMOTHER

★★★☆☆

Wolfmother seamlessly weaves elements of Zeppelin, Sabbath, MC5, The Doors, Floyd, Kansas, and several hundred others into one kick-ass package of classic rock mimicry. (The dark, violent-nature Frank Frazetta cover artwork seals the deal.) While **MYLES HESKETT**'s Keith Moon–, Bill Ward–, and John Densmore–esque performances will levitate the limbs of air-drummers everywhere, time will tell if Wolfmother has discovered pure gold or are pushin' pyrite. (Modular Recordings/Interscope) **Will Romano**

AVISHAI COHEN CONTINUO

★★★★☆

A study in low-intensity burn, Continuo features turbulent bassist **Avishai Cohen** and **MARK GUILIANA**, the drummer most often cited in *MD*'s recent "Future Of Drumming" feature. Although he uses brushes for much of the album, Guiliana's precision, creativity, and percolating time feel are the perfect match for Cohen's blast-furnace compositions. On the tracks "Emotional Storm" and "Smash" in particular, Guiliana melds with Cohen's caustic riffs, playing with economy and explosive power, whether swinging or smacking a backbeat. He sails between ideas, executing whip-cracking dynamics and vibrant colorings throughout. (RazDaz) **Ken Micallef**

SHADOWS FALL FALLOUT FROM THE WAR

★★★★☆

A collection of new compositions, re-worked rare back catalog, and cover songs, *Fallout From The War* appears more consistent than the track listing would lead one to believe. Credit drummer **JASON BITTNER**, who makes the entire assortment a cohesive listen. With accents permeating through the rapid-fire double-bass kicks on "Will To Rebuild," Bittner nails his parts without a hitch. Plus, his smooth hustle of Leeway's "Mark Of The Squealer" and the bluesy groove on "Teasn', Pleasn'" show that Bittner can play just about anyone's material with the same precision he brings to Shadows Fall originals. (Century Media) **Waleed Rashidi**

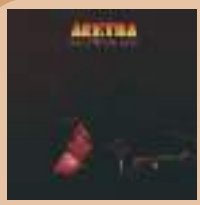
DRUM NATION VOLUME THREE

★★★☆☆

The third volume of this drum-centric CD series features the current reigning giants of metal drumming. A mosh pit full of instrumental madness featuring **JORDAN MANCINO**, **CHRIS ADLER**, **JEREMY COLSON**, **JUSTIN FOLEY**, **JASON BITTNER**, **KENNETH SCHALK**, **JOE NUNEZ**, **TOM TAITANO**, **CHRIS PENNIE**, **DEREK RODDY**, **RAANEN BOZZIO**, and **MICHAEL JUSTICE**, as expected, there's lots of inspiring fills, blazing double bass chops, and creative odd-meter grooves layered with shredding guitar. Justin Foley injects some organic world percussion, Michael Justice and Derek Roddy win the "super-human speed" award, Chris Pennie creates a suspenseful industrial mood layered with impressive soloing, while Adler, Bittner, Colson, and Schalk display tasteful overall performances. The video portion of the disc offers a brief, entertaining clip from each drummer. (Magna Carta) **Mike Haid**

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

BY PATRICK BERKERY



ARETHA FRANKLIN, KING CURTIS

Reissues of separate *Live At Fillmore West* titles by Aretha Franklin and King Curtis document the bygone days when R&B divas like Aretha Franklin didn't shield their drummers behind Plexiglas or chain them to click tracks. Back then Aretha shared her backing band

(anchored by **BERNARD PURDIE**) with the opener, go-to R&B sax man King Curtis. Purdie's unmistakable ghost strokes and funky punctuations are all over these two sets from 1971. Curtis requests "a pound of fatback drums" during "Memphis Soul Stew," and Purdie complies with a busy, stuttering groove. Franklin's needs were more varied, but Purdie delivered, whether piloting the hyper-speed "Respect" like his throne was on fire, or accenting tricky turnarounds during an otherwise mellow version of "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Not just funky drumming, but *brilliant* drumming. (Atco/Rhino)

TAKING THE REINS

JIM BLACK / ALASNOAXIS
DOGS OF GREAT INDIFFERENCE

Avant-jazz master Jim Black embraces the backbeat on the newest release from his experimental-rock side-project. (Winter & Winter)

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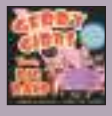
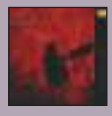
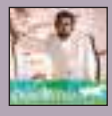


MULTI-MEDIA

BLIND FAITH LONDON HYDE PARK 1969

DVD LEVEL: ALL $19.98

★★★☆☆

In hindsight, maybe Blind Faith's public unveiling should have been more low-key. Debuting their limited, under-rehearsed repertoire before 100,000 fans in London's Hyde Park was the beginning of the end for the short-lived supergroup headed by **Eric Clapton** and **Steve Winwood.** This DVD captures that ramshackle gig, marked by lengthy jams that (pardon the pun) don't always find their way home. **GINGER BAKER**'s playing is a highlight, though. His jazz roots show as he guides "Well All Right" with subtle accents, and makes the slow blues of "Sleeping In The Ground" swing. While the remix sounds a little pristine for the footage, it does bring out Baker's ghost strokes on "Under My Thumb" in hi-def glory. (Sanctuary) **Patrick Berkery**

DRUM PLAY-ALONGS, VOL. 1–3: POP ROCK, CLASSIC ROCK, HARD ROCK

BOOK/CD LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE $12.95 EACH

★★☆☆☆

I'm sure a *few* good songs have been written in the past twenty years, but none appear on the first three volumes of this play-along series. Anyway, hearing the sterile time-coded versions of these classics only brings to light the nuance that was allowed on drum recordings in the old days. These books may provide the beginning to intermediate drummer with a decent cross-section of styles and beats upon which to build a working rock vocabulary. But they also (unintentionally) point out the difference between playing time and really grooving. My recommendation is to go back, find the original versions of these songs, and play along with *them*. (Hal Leonard) **Robin Tolleson**

TIME, TASTE, TECHNIQUE & TIMBRE BY ED SHAUGHNESSY & CLEM DEROSA

DVD LEVEL: ALL $29.95

★★★½☆

It's a pleasure to watch and listen to these two true musicians discuss the four Ts as they apply to big band drumming. They know what makes a well-rounded musician and a good-sounding band. Plus, they see the big picture and respect the organic side of things. ("Basic, good time is still never called 'accurately metronomic time,'" contends Shaughnessy.) Other topics include playing certain parts of the kit on certain parts of a tune, and being authentic to the style you're playing. The pair also discuss "feathering" the bass drum, playing a solid shuffle, and using brushes on a slow two-beat. Recommended. (Hal Leonard) **Robin Tolleson**

DOUBLE BASS DRUMMING WORKSHOP FEATURING JEFF BOWDERS

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $24.95

★★★★☆

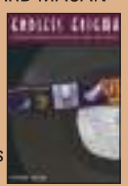
On this superbly produced, affordable DVD loaded with real-world applications, well-spoken Musicians Institute instructor Jeff Bowders covers pedal technique and balance, mirrored double bass grooves, endurance and stamina exercises, double bass fills, and soloing concepts. Students can follow the exercises in the accompanying booklet and on screen. Seasoned double bass players will benefit from Bowders' groove ideas, interesting fills, and impressive soloing concepts. (Hal Leonard) **Mike Haid**

AND FURTHERMORE...

GENE KRUPA
THE PICTORIAL LIFE OF A JAZZ LEGEND

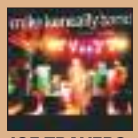
A fun flip-through, this scrapbook of photos spanning Krupa's life, compiled by Dr. Bruce L. Klauber, includes a CD with eight rare collectors' tracks. With little text, it may not be the choice for casual fans, but Krupa cultists will definitely drool. (Alfred) **Jeff Potter**

ENDLESS ENIGMA: A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY OF EMERSON LAKE & PALMER BY EDWARD MACAN



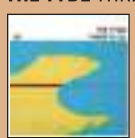
A 785-page, highly detailed look into the innovative music of progressive classical/rock icons Emerson Lake & Palmer. Macan attempts to defend and validate the band, its music, and '70s prog in general. In-depth analysis of the ELP catalog and extensive discography included. A great read for ELP fans. (www.opencourtbooks.com) **Mike Haid**

MIKE KENEALLY BAND
GUITAR THERAPY LIVE



A musically whacked-out, live collection of original rock material from the maniacal mind of guitarist/vocalist/composer/Zappa alum Mike Keneally. Drummer **JOE TRAVERS** easily covers this rhythmically dangerous ground and performs a technically impressive solo. (exowax/www.exowax.com) **Mike Haid**

THE TYDE THREE'S CO.



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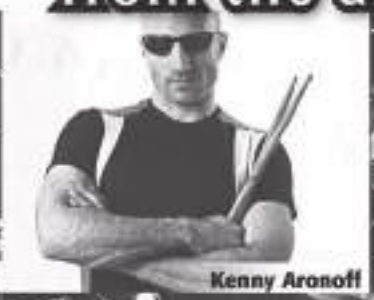
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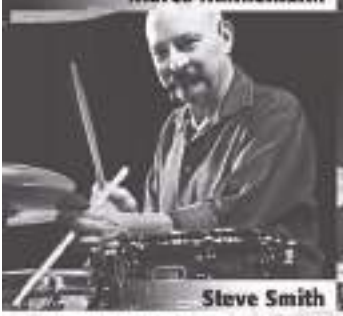
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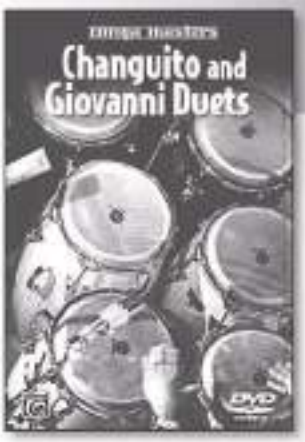

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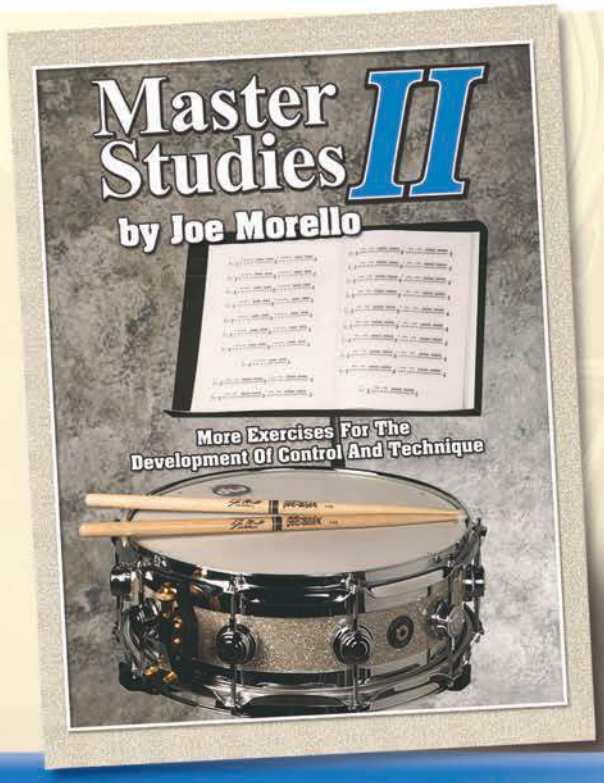

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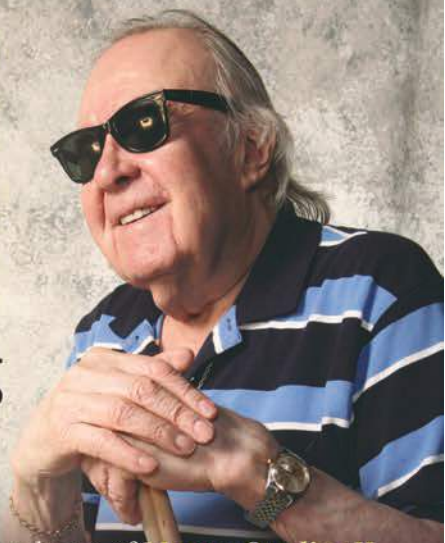

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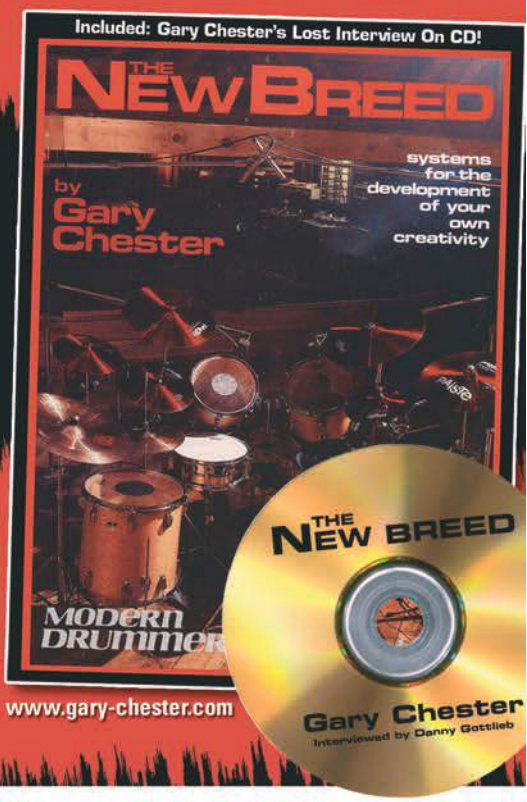

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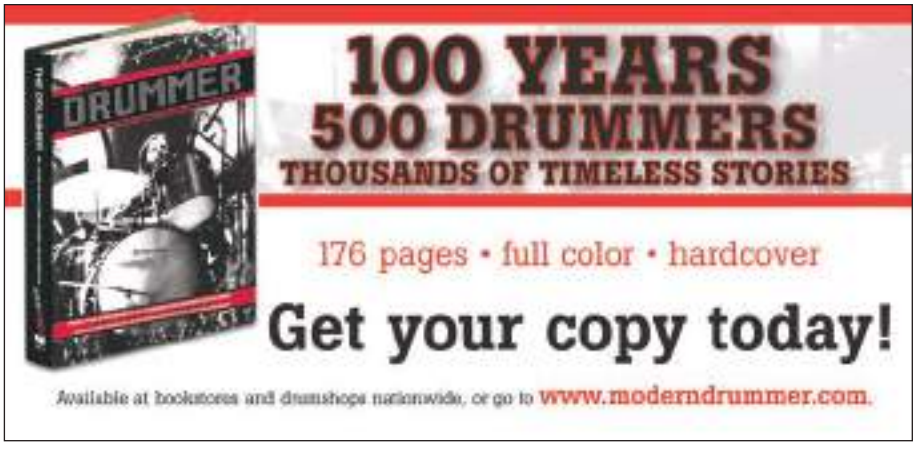
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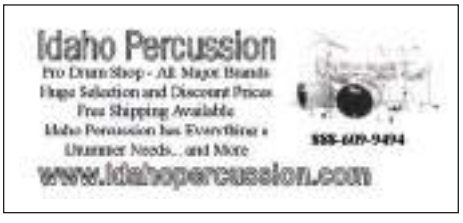
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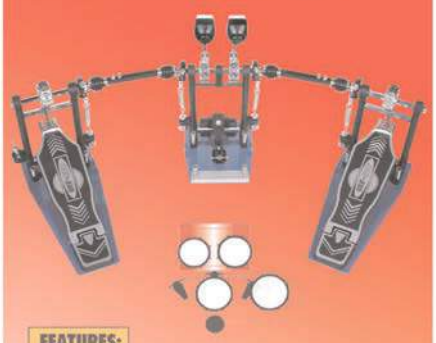

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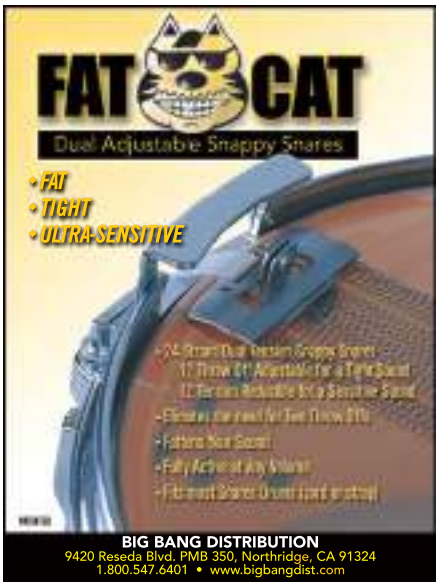
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Baltimore-Washington: Grant Menefee's studio of drumming. B.M. Berklee College of Music. All styles and levels. Tel: (410) 747-STIX.

Baltimore—brand-new Fells Point studio. Learn interdependence, reading, technique, time playing, double kick, soloing. Accepting serious students only. All styles, all levels. **Www.marcnorgaard.com.** (410) 419-8297.

Silver Spring, MD—Mike Reeves. Beginner to advanced. (240) 423-8644.

Frustrated with your feet? In LA, get sick scary double pedal chops! Rick, (310) 392-7499.

Wanted

Vintage Avedis and K Zildjian, Paiste UFIP cymbals, American drums. Blaircymb@aol.com. (800) 733-81164 or (616) 364-0604.

Employment opportunities for drummers–Oceanbound Entertainment has year-round positions available for drummers. Stop struggling, get a music career that pays! Www.oceanbound.ca.

Miscellaneous

New! Video clips, free drum lessons, drum videos, monthly giveaways at Dave Bedrock's americandrumschool.com.

Www.chriscawthray.com—roots/jazz/rock, featured in 12/05 MD Critique.

Www.buildyourowndrums.com.

Www.MusiciansContact.com. Need work? Paying jobs and resumes online. Thousands of satisfied members since 1969, tel: (818) 888-7879.

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Mannix Coin, please contact Simmy, (757) 376-3397 or simi50@yahoo.com.

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Vintage Drum Center—Buy with confidence from the expert! Www.vintagedrum.com. Tel: (800) 729-3111, email: vintagedrum@lisco.com.

BackBeat Drums. Vintage & restored drums, cymbals, stands, and parts. **Www.backbeatdrums.com, Tel: (208) 265-4336.**

A Drummer's Tradition features an incredible collection of vintage drums for sale. Visit our shop in San Rafael, California, or check our Web site at www.adrummerstradition.com for weekly updates. We are always buying! Call 10–6 PST, Mon–Sat, tel: (415) 458-1688, fax: (415) 458-1689.

Cymbolic! World's finest **vintage** cymbals. Avedis, also K Zildjian, Paiste, UFIP, more. We have drums too! Blaircymb@aol.com. (800) 733-8164 or (616) 364-0604.

Vintage: Snares, sets, singles, cymbals, hardware, logos, and trades. Look/see, www.drumatix.com.

Gretsch drums, **Paiste Formula 602**, traditional cymbals. Hal Howland, www.halhowland.com.

You need: **Drumfarm** vintage drum list. Bobby Chiasson's Jollity Drum Farm, 420 Coach Road, Argyle, NY 12809. Tel: (518) 638-8559, www.drumfarm.com.

The Ludwig Book! by Rob Cook. Business history and dating guide, 300 pages (64 color), Wm. F. Ludwig II autobiography, books on Rogers, Leedy, Slingerland, calfskin heads, gut snares, and more. Contact Rebeats, tel: (989) 463-4757, Rob@rebeats.com, Web site: www.rebeats.com.

Wanted

Vintage Drums/Cymbals—vintagedrum@lisco.com. (800) 729-3111.

Miscellaneous

Www.vintagelogos.com. Vintage-style logos for kick drums.

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KoSA 2006

The grand finale of the KoSA faculty recital

The eleventh KoSA International Percussion Workshop And Festival was held August 7–13 at Vermont's Johnson State College. Participants from the UK, Belgium, Canada, and the US enjoyed the unique experience of studying, eating, and living with the faculty. Cory Porter, Jim Richardson, Jeremiah Baumgarten, and Mark Leonard were winners in the 2006 KoSA/*Modern Drummer* essay-writing contest, earning full scholarships provided by Tama, Mapex, Factory Metal Percussion, and Evans.

This year's faculty featured drumset artists **Clayton Cameron**, **Kenwood Dennard**, **Dom Famularo**, **Vera Figueiredo**, **Mark Kelso**, **Bill Meligari**, **Bernard Purdie**, **Antonio Sanchez**, **Ed Soph**, and *MD* senior editor **Rick Van Horn**. World percussion classes were taught by **Memo Acevedo**, **John Amira**, **Cassio Duarte**, **Gordon Gottlieb**, **Jamey Haddad**, **Giovanni Hidalgo**, **Kalani**, **Glen Velez**, and **Michael Wimberly & Shauni Borden**. **Mario DeCiutiis** and **Allan Molnar** covered electronics and music technology, while ethnic, jazz, and classical mallet techniques were offered by **Valerie Naranjo**, **David Friedman**, and **Marie-Josée Simard**. **Gary France** and **Jeff Salisbury** focused on orchestral percussion, and **Lou Robinson** revealed the mysteries of the didgeridoo. The faculty was led by KoSA artistic director **Aldo Mazza**.

Nightly concerts by faculty members drew participants and local community members alike. A participants concert on Friday, followed by a faculty recital on Saturday, closed the week on a high note. These concerts were taped by Hudson Music for the first *Live At KoSA* DVD, to be released shortly.

KoSA sponsors included Alfred, Audix, Australian Originals, Axis, Basix, Bosphorus, Calzone, Cooperman, Craviotto Drums, The D'Addario Foundation, Drummers Collective, Drum Workshop, Evans, Factory Metal Percussion, Gibraltar, Hansenfütz, HQ, Innovative Percussion, Latin Percussion, KAT, Ludwig/Musser, Malletech, Mapex, Mike Balter, Mountain Rythym, Paiste, Peripole/Bergerault, Pintech, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Sabian, Shure, Sibelius, Tama, Taye, Toca, Yamaha, Zildjian, and *Modern Drummer*. For more information, visit www.kosamusic.com.

Clayton Cameron's brush class

Bernard Purdie

Valerie Naranjo and student

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Whether you're interested in Bill Bruford, progressive rock and jazz drumming, or just great drumming, this is an event you shouldn't miss. *An Evening with Bill Bruford* is Bill's first North American clinic tour in more than 20 years, and like everything he does, you can be sure to expect the unexpected.

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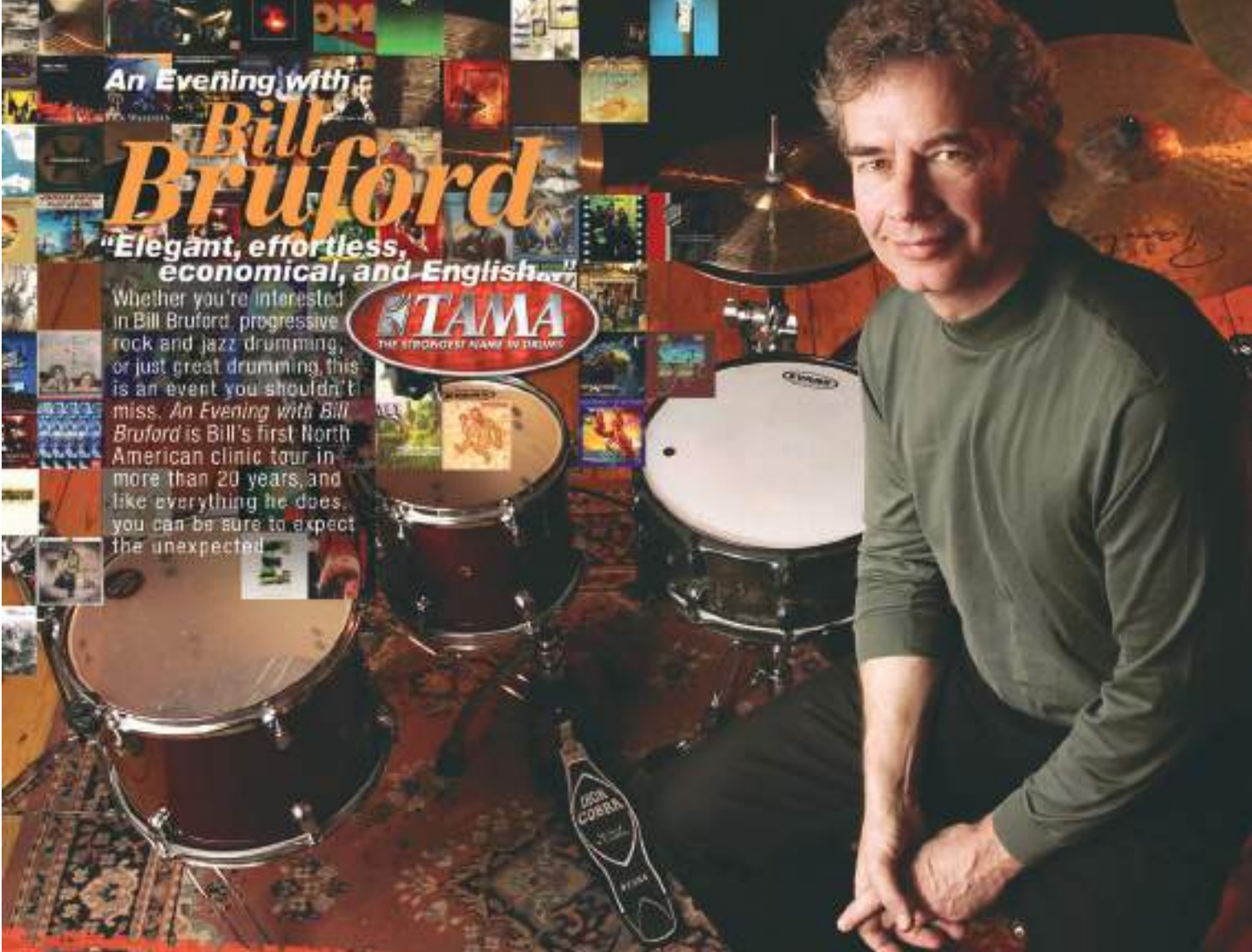

At work with King Crimson: 1974 Photo by Jacque Degan

Introducing Starclassic: 1995

With Earthworks: 2000 Photo by Mathias Aelt

A true drumming icon, Bill was named to Modern Drummer's Hall of Fame in 1990. He's played with some of the most revered ensembles of the past thirty years, including ***Yes, Genesis, King Crimson, UK, Gong, and National Health*** – not to mention leading his own bands including ***Bruford*** and his current vehicle, ***Earthworks.*** Perhaps more than any other drummer in progressive music, Bill's playing has had immeasurable influence on both the drumming and the music.

During these very special appearances, Bill will be highlighting and demonstrating tracks from across his lengthy career, which will make *An Evening with Bill Bruford* a drum clinic at a higher level than you've ever experienced. Please don't miss it!

Bill will be playing his new Starclassic Bubinga drum kit on his *An Evening with Bill Bruford Tour.*

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Nov 8 Long Island Drum Center – Long Island, NY
Call 516.694.5432 for clinic location & ticket info

Nov 9 Drum World – Pittsburgh, PA
Call 412.343.2600 for clinic location & ticket info

Nov 10 Forks Drum Closet – Nashville, TN
Call 615.383.8343 for clinic location & ticket info

CANADIAN DATES & CITIES

Nov 12 Montreal Drum Festival – Montreal
Call 514.987.6919 for clinic location & ticket info

Nov 13 Long and McQuade – Ottawa
Call 613.521.5900 for clinic location & ticket info

Nov 14 Long and McQuade – Burlington
Call 905.319.3330 for clinic location & ticket info

For more information visit tama.com

Australia's Ultimate Drummers Weekend 2006

Cindy Blackman

Tommy Igoe

The fourteenth Australia's Ultimate Drummers Weekend was held this past July 22 and 23 at Melbourne's Darebin Arts & Entertainment Center. AUDW is the biggest drumming festival in the southern hemisphere, offering performances from world-class drummers, as well as workshops where learning and inspiration are the key ingredients.

This year's lineup included international drum stars **Dave Weckl**, **Thomas Lang**, **Tommy Igoe**, **Cindy Blackman**, **Rodney Holmes**, and **Dom Famularo**. Australia provided two fine players of its own: technical giant **Grant Collins** and talented up & comer **Leigh Fisher**.

The weekend offered diversity in abundance. "Big kit" performances from Lang and Collins combined musical complexity and technical wizardry. Leigh Fisher's performance contained elements of acoustic and electronic drumming, with both types of kits set up on stage.

Holmes and Blackman showed how much creativity and musicality can be displayed on smaller-scale kits, while Tommy Igoe spoke about the need to groove in order to get work

"Dom and Friends" (Famularo, with Igoe and Lang), was a highlight of the weekend. Comic and energetic, the trio used Chick Corea's "Spain" as the link in an otherwise totally improvised performance. At one point, Tommy and Thomas played one of the fastest, cleanest single-stroke rolls you'd ever hope to hear—with each contributing only one hand! The show ended with an exciting performance by The Dave Weckl Band, during which Dave impressed the audience with his unique style and sound.

Thanks go to organizer Frank Corniola for a first-rate production. Frank is a major contributor to drumming in Australia as an educator, as publisher of *Drumscene* magazine, and as the driving force behind AUDW. **Paul Matcott**

Rodney Holmes

Dave Weckl

Grant Collins

Leigh Fisher

In Memoriam

Philip "Pip" Pyle

Pip Pyle, an English drummer who performed with National Health, Gong, and Hatfield And The North (as well as a number of other European rock and prog-rock acts) from the 1970s on, died this past August 28 in Paris. He was fifty-six.

Pyle's career included membership in Chicken Shack (1970-71), Gong (1971, 1992–96), Paul Jones Group (1972), Hatfield And The North (1972–75), Weightwatchers (1975–76), National Health (1977–83), Soft Heap (1978–88), Rapid Eye Movement (1980–81), In Cahoots (1982–2001), Pip Pyle's Equip'Out (1984–95), Patrice Meyer Trio/Quartet (1985–87), Mimi Lorenzini Trio (1987), Faton Cahen Trio (1987-88), John Greaves Band (1990–91), Short Wave (1991–96), Hugh Hopper Band (1994), and Richard Sinclair/RSVP (1994). At the time of his passing Pyle was performing on tour with Hatfield And The North.

Miguel "Angá" Díaz

Cuban conga virtuoso Miguel "Angá" Díaz died this past August 9 in Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, Spain, as the result of a heart attack. He was forty-five.

Díaz made his reputation with the Cuban supergroup Irakere in the late 1980s and early '90s. He left in 1994 and began to collaborate with jazz artists like saxophonist Steve Coleman and trumpeter Roy Hargrove. Díaz also became part of the touring group associated with The Buena Vista Social Club, playing on albums by Afro-Cuban All Stars, Omara Portuondo, Ruben Gonzalez, and Ibrahim Ferrer. He also created the *Anga Mania* instructional video for MIM Films.

Díaz's own *Echu Mingua* was released last year by World Circuit. The album takes many directions, including West African music, Santeria chants, hip-hop, and themes by John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk.

Bruce Carter

Bruce Carter, who helped Portland, Oregon–based R&B group Pleasure become a nationally successful act in the 1970s, died this past August 12, as the result of a heart attack. He was forty-nine.

In later years, Carter toured with smooth-jazz superstar Kenny G, as well as maintaining a schedule of recording work in LA, Seattle, and Portland. Most recently he had been playing with singer Linda Hornbuckle's band.

Indy Quickies

The **2006 New York City Rock And Roll Fantasy Camp** was held this past August 13–17. Campers had the opportunity to learn from and perform with classic and current rock stars, including Spencer Davis, Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, and drummers Kelly Keagy, Simon Kirke, and Sandy Gennaro. For a full report, visit www.moderndrummer.com. For more information on future Fantasy Camps, visit www.rockandrollfantasycamp.com.

Fantasy Camp drummer George Smith got to play with Jeff "Skunk" Baxter (left) and the CBS Orchestra horn section.

Sixteen-year-old **Hannah Ford** was recently selected as the 2006 winner of Rock Falls, Illinois' **Louie Bellson Heritage Days Drum Competition.** For her winning performance, Hannah received an autographed Louie Bellson snare drum and an assortment of drumheads from Remo.

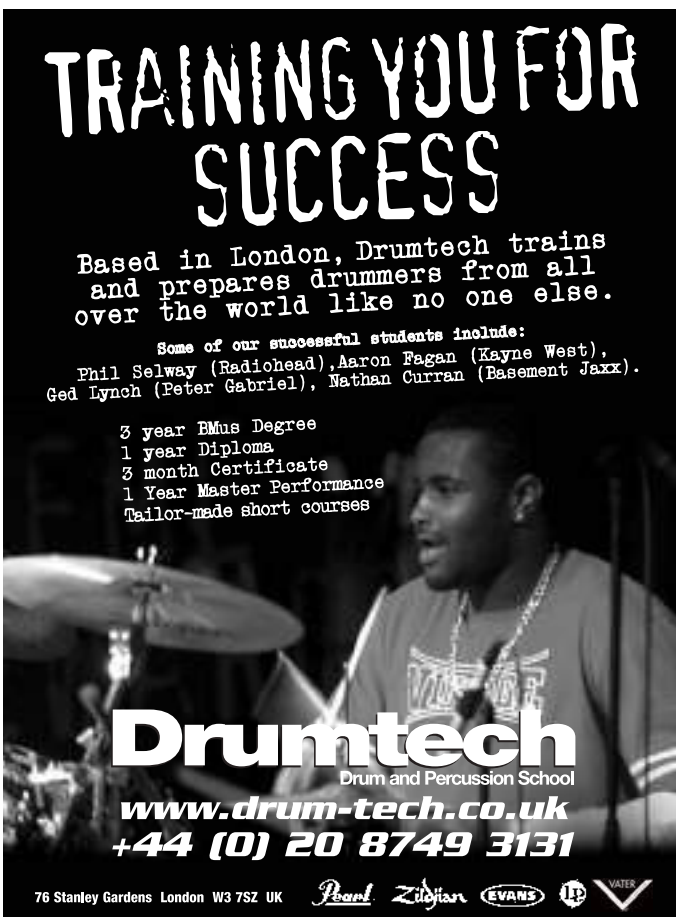
Louie Bellson Heritage Days is an annual celebration intended to honor the local hero and draw attention to the city where he was born and raised. The drum contest was sponsored by Remo and Zildjian and supported by local Rock Falls businesses.

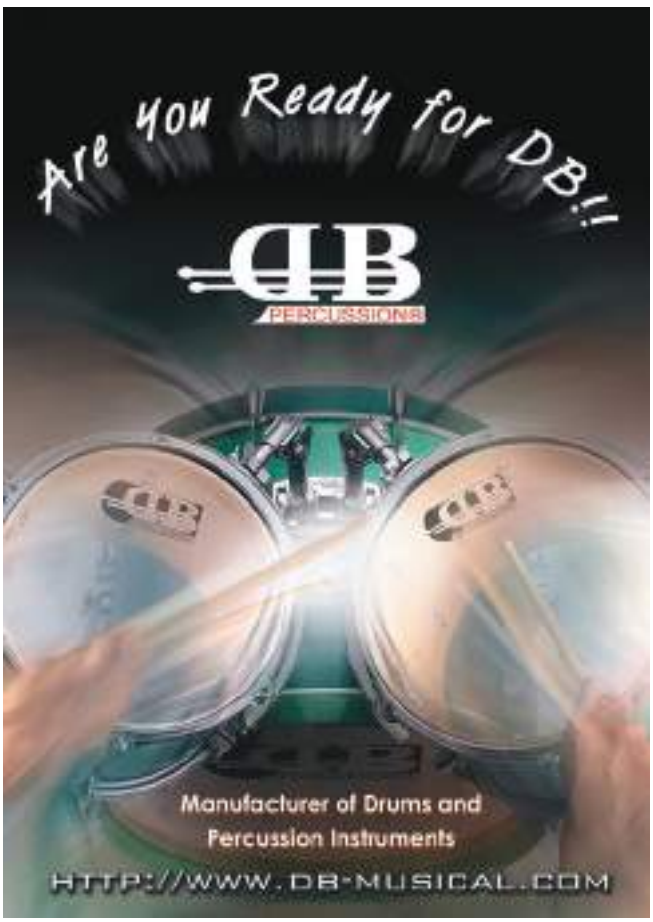
For further information on Hannah Ford, email marketing@drums4na.com. For details on Louie Bellson Heritage Days, email Gayla Kolb at coordinator@rockfallsdevelopment.org.

Yamaha Corporation Of America has acquired the intellectual property rights to the legendary **Rogers Drum Company.** Rogers, founded in 1849, enjoys a reputation as one of the most innovative drum lines ever sold. Yamaha plans to use their own expertise to improve on the Rogers legacy. From left: Tom Sumner, vice president/general manager, Yamaha Pro Audio & Combo Division; Yoshi Doi, president, Yamaha Corporation Of America; Terry Lewis, senior vice president, Music Marketing Group, Yamaha Corporation Of America. For more information, visit www.yamahadrums.com.

TRX Cymbals has added individual photos and digital sound samples of its cymbals to its Web site, trxcymbals.com.

MD publisher and CEO Isabel Spagnardi (left) recently visited with Four Seasons and solo star Frankie Valli (center) and his drummer Craig Pilo following Frankie's show at the Hilton showroom in Atlantic City.





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Just Another Garage Drummer

Bill Allen of Baltimore, Maryland is like a lot of other drummers. He keeps his drums in a garage. A storage garage. A big storage garage. Bill's kit *fills* that garage.

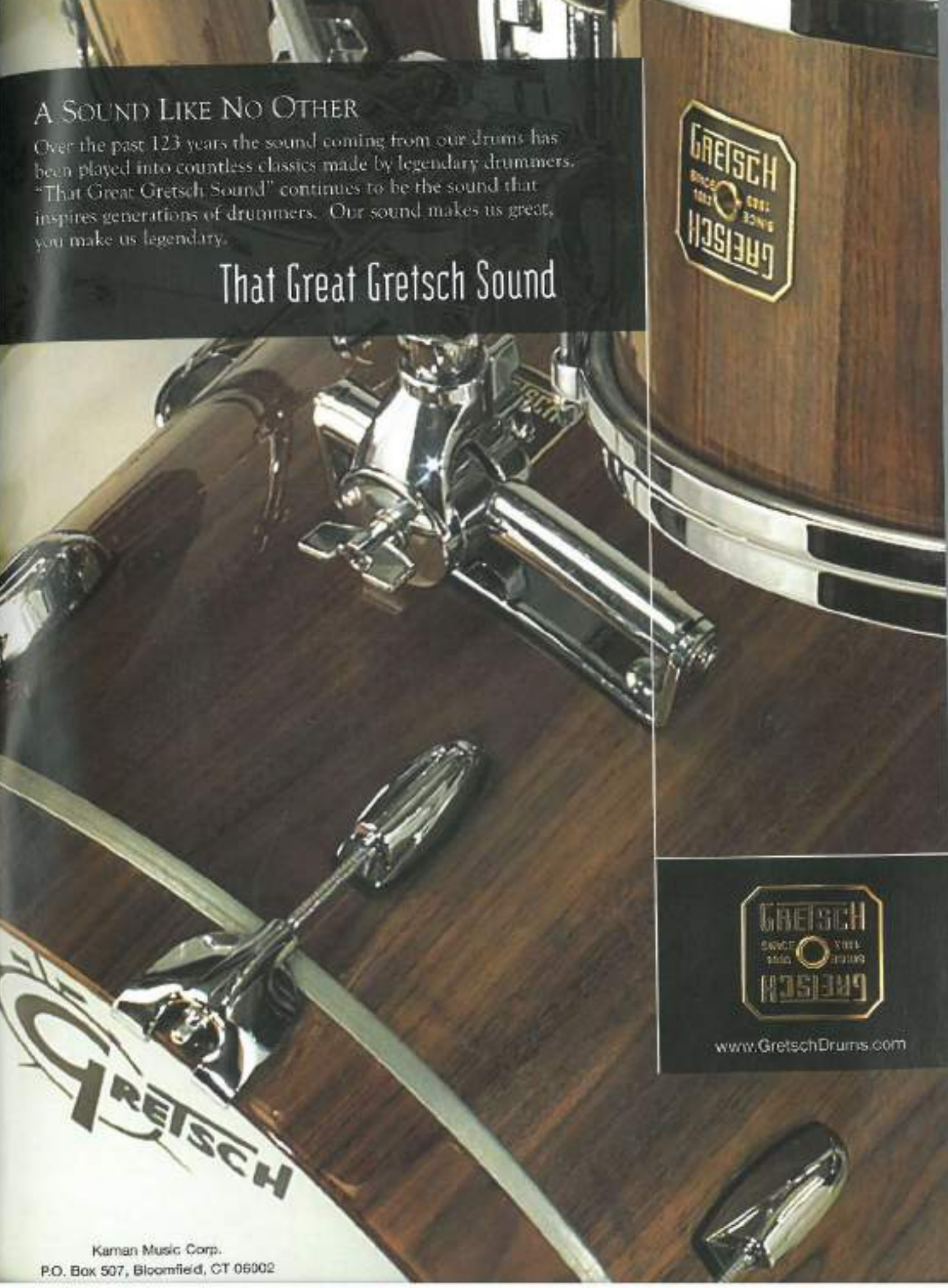
And no wonder. Bill has assembled—quite literally, considering some of his home-made stands and frames—a sixty-eight-piece kit. It features a bevy of Ludwig drums (including a bass drum on its side as a second floor tom), a vintage Slingerland snare, three timpani, several gongs, a variety of cymbals from Zildjian, Paiste, and Meinl, a wide range of ethnic and orchestral percussion, and hardware from Pearl, Tama, and Axis.

Bill plays his kit six days a week in the garage, and has (believe it or not) taken it out on numerous occasions to play with local bands. Heck, we think just moving it out of the garage for these photos was an accomplishment. Bill thanks Thomas Touchet, Baron Reinfelder, and Jason Dinh for their help on that project.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.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